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Civilian wounded in SLA shelling

TYRE (AFP) — A Lebanese civilian was wounded Sunday as mortar fire from the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) hit a village north of Israel's occupation zone in south Lebanon, Lebanese police said. The civilian, 76, was wounded in the head as the fire hit the outskirts of the village of Majdal Zoun facing the western sector of the zone. The SLA fired some 40 mortar rounds in the direction of the villages of Majdal Zoun and Mansuri after its position at Al Hardum was targeted by some 15 mortar rounds fired by anti-Israeli fighters, according to an SLA spokesman. The spokesman said no-one was injured in the shelling of the SLA position. The Lebanese Shiite militia Amal, headed by Lebanese Parliamentary Speaker Nabih Berri, later claimed responsibility for the attack against the SLA.

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U.S. Navy helicopter crashes in Red Sea

MANAMA (AP) — A U.S. Navy helicopter crashed in the Red Sea but no one was hurt, the Navy said Sunday. The SH-60 B Seahawk helicopter crashed Saturday evening while on a routine flight 48 kilometres off the southern coast of Eritrea, the Bahrain-based U.S. 5th Fleet said in a statement. The helicopter was operating from the USS Carr, a frigate. The three crew members were rescued by another helicopter from the USS Hayler, a nearby destroyer. The cause of the accident is being investigated.

After public outcry Water Minister Haddadin resigns

By Ahmad Khatib
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Minister of Water and Irrigation Munther Haddadin on Sunday submitted his resignation and requested immediate leave from government until his resignation is formally accepted.

"I had the honour to serve my country and my King within your government as minister of water and irrigation. But I have faced difficult circumstances while carrying out my duties," Haddadin said in his letter to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali.

"I do not want these circumstances to adversely affect the achievements of the present government and the Jordan Valley Authority and the Water Authority."

"I have given deep thought to my position before submitting my resignation to you and I hope a Royal Decree will be issued accepting the resignation. From now and until the Royal Decree is issued, I request to have an official leave," the minister added.

The French news agency quoted an unnamed official as saying that Haddadin was ordered to resign after the parliamentary committee charged with investigating the water crisis held him responsible.

"A minister in Abdul Salam Majali's government will be given the water portfolio after Haddadin's dismissal," AFP quoted the official as saying.

However, Haddadin denied this, telling the Jordan Times that "it was my decision." He refused to comment further.

The joint parliamentary committee probing the recent water contamination crisis urged the Lower House on Sunday to press the government for an explanation.

The Water and Health Committee also slammed the government for "tackling the crisis in a manner that lacked credibility and transparency" and said it was trying to sideline Parliament's role as a watchdog by withholding information dealing with laboratory tests on the quality of domestic water.

"The committee asks the honourable House to carry out its full monitoring responsibility and to question the government's actions and measures regarding this issue and other issues at the appropriate time," it said in a seven-page report issued after days of deliberations with water and health officials and experts.

According to deputies, Parliament cannot take any action during the current extraordinary session because its agenda is fixed by a Royal Decree. Hence, they would have to wait



Munther Haddadin (File photo)

'It was my decision'

for the ordinary session, which opens in November or December, if they want to question the government.

The committee blamed the water problem on "a change in the quality of water coming from Lake Tiberias and other extra water sources

that carried large amounts of algae and organic substances which the Zai Water Treatment Plant [ZWP] was not equipped to handle."

The ZWP is the main source of domestic water supplies to western Amman, providing the capital with 25 million cubic metres a year.

"The committee believes that the official parties responsible for water dealt with this crisis in a manner that lacked transparency, honesty and credibility, as they did not inform citizens about the cause of the problem and ways to prevent it."

The government issued contradictory statements after the crisis, which began on July 10 when residents of west Amman complained of foul-smelling water supplies that had a strange taste and colour. Initially, officials blamed unusual levels of algae found in the water on soaring summer heat, but later said the problem was caused by human and operational errors at the ZWP.

The Ministry of Health later advised citizens to boil water for a minute before drinking it after acknowledging the strange taste and colour.

The committee also asked the government to conduct "serious tests" on the quality of water reaching homes and to expose all "the effects of all pollutants, including chemical agents,

that might affect the health of people in an adverse manner."

The committee said the government had failed to provide it with laboratory tests on the percentage of halogen elements (chemicals such as chlorine, fluorine, bromine and astatine that form salts by simple union with a metal) in the water.

The chlorine, according to many water experts, produces toxins that may cause cancer when it reacts with water containing high concentrations of algae and organic substances.

"The government did not submit its laboratory tests to the committees upon its request," said the commission. "This means that the government tried to conceal information and to weaken the monitoring role of Parliament."

It also criticised the formation of a governmental committee appointed last week to investigate the crisis, saying it would rather have seen a neutral committee that drew representatives from the private sector.

It recommended the formation of a national commission including water experts to discuss

(Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh and Francesca Ciriaci contributed to this article)

(Continued on page 7)

House passes press draft with few significant changes

By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament on Sunday concluded the much-awaited discussion of its amended version of the government's controversial press and publications law, introducing few significant changes.

The National Guidance Committee's (NGC) version of the draft scrapped the court's ability to imprison journalists and slashed financial penalties against journalists from tens of thousands of dinars to hundreds in some cases. It also lowered capital requirements for daily and weekly publications and threw out bank guarantees.

During yesterday's session,

however, the House overlooked some of the NGC's suggestions voting in favour of an article that falls under the prohibition category as it appeared in the government's draft. The article, if passed by the Senate, will deny the coverage of crimes and court cases in the Kingdom.

According to Article 44 of the government's draft "publications are prohibited from publishing any information related to an ongoing investigation, court case, or crime committed in the Kingdom unless permission is obtained from the General Prosecutor."

In addition, "minutes of court proceedings are prohibited from being published before a final ruling is issued unless per-

mission from the court is obtained."

Lawmakers also voted on a highly controversial item which bars journalists from "writing any articles or information that carries personal insults to the leaders of Arab, Islamic or friendly countries or to the heads of diplomatic missions and their accredited members in the Kingdom."

Some deputies urged their colleagues to drop the provision, saying it carried "dangerous implications."

"I don't believe that there is any country that adheres to such an article," Islamist Deputy Abdullah Alkaleil told the House. "There is no need for this provision for there is no such thing as 'personal

insults.'" When the article was put to vote, 27 out of the present 50 deputies voted in favour of deleting it.

The motion, however, failed after a second round of votes on the same article, which left it intact. This caused 14 deputies, protesting the legality of the legislative process, to withdraw from yesterday's session.

After some debate, lawmakers also endorsed a provision buried in the end of the draft that gives courts the right to suspend a publication while it looks into a case for the time it deems necessary, if "it sees that secures public interest and national security."

"We are dealing with the press as if it is one of the coun-

try's enemies," said Deputy Nazih Atmamin. "This article crushes the essence of journalism."

The issue of penalties, particularly imprisonment, against journalists and editors, as well as owners of publications, for violations of the government's draft, caused an uproar not only among the local press corps, but also from international human rights and freedom organisations.

Most relieving for journalists and editors will be the substantial reduction in penalties levied against those in violation of the articles in the draft law (see related story on page 3).

Regent receives credentials of U.S. ambassador, other envoys Daoudieh sworn-in ambassador to Morocco, Mutawi to Netherlands

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Sunday received at Basman Palace credentials of the ambassador of the United States of America, William Joseph Burns.

Following the presentation Ambassador Burns said: "I was delighted to return to Jordan where I began diplomatic career fifteen years ago."

He said that much has changed since he left Jordan in 1984. "During that period, the common interest in regional peace and prosperity that binds the United States and Jordan has grown stronger. While many challenges and problems remain on the road ahead, I arrive in Jordan deeply committed to continued partnership between our two countries; to the pursuit of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region; and to contributing to the development of a successful Jordanian economy that benefits all Jordanians," he said.

"I am grateful to President Clinton and Secretary Albright

Six Jordanian scholars win research award

AMMAN (J.T.) — Seventeen Arab academics, including six Jordanians, yesterday were awarded the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Award for Arab Scholars in recognition of their efforts and studies.

Six Jordanian academics from the University of Jordan, Yarmouk University, Jordan University for Science and Technology and Amman Private University won prizes for their research in the fields of geology, economy, engineering, mathematics and Arabic literature.

Other winners included scholars from Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, Algeria, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia.

Abdul Majid Shoman, chairman of the foundation's board of directors, said the award aims at supporting scientific research in Arab countries.

"The award aims to encourage young Arab scholars to help their countries through scientific achievements," Shoman said. "In the near future, the foundation will organise a serious dialogue between local universities to discuss the best way to support and implement such scientific research."

The Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation launched the award in 1981 with an original value of JD3,000, which was increased by the foundation's board of directors in 1992 to JD5,000.



HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, along with HRH Prince Rashid and the chief of the Royal Court, Fayed Tarawneh, Sunday attend the funeral of former Senator Ahmad Tarawneh (Photo by Boghos)

King conveys condolences to Tarawneh family

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday spoke by phone with Royal Court Chief Fayed Tarawneh and offered condolences over the death of his father, former Senator Ahmad Tarawneh, who passed away on Saturday at the age of 78.

Dr. Tarawneh thanked King Hussein in his name

and on behalf of the Tarawneh clan for his gesture.

The body of the late Tarawneh was laid to rest Sunday at the Royal cemetery in Amman with full honours.

The body, wrapped in the Jordanian flag and carried on a gun carriage, was first taken to the Royal Guards Mosque for prayers. The

funeral procession then moved to the cemetery, where guns were fired in salute.

HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, along with Dr. Tarawneh and Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and members of the Tarawneh clan, received condolences from the mourners, including Royal family members, Parli-

ment speakers, senators, deputies, former prime ministers, senior officials and representatives of various public sectors as well as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces and senior officers, Civil Defence, Public Security and General Intelligence Department officers and representatives of diplomatic missions in Jordan.

Government's efforts to control profiteering from water scare failing, officials say

By Mohammad Ben Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Recent government measures to crack down on drivers of water trucks profiteering from the recent water contamination crisis appear to have failed, officials monitoring distribution at private wells said Sunday.

Many said some truckers were still ferrying water to customers at prices sometimes more than five times higher than those set by the government since the crisis erupted on July 10, when residents of west Amman complained of foul-smelling domestic water supplies with a strange taste.

"We are only decorating the place," said a monitor dispatched by the Jordan Water Authority to control water selling at one of several private wells providing alternative sources of water to Amman.

The official suggested that the

government should place all private water wells under its control and force drivers to abide by the rules.

Many owners of private wells have closed down their businesses since the government asked them on Thursday to sign documents committing themselves to selling water at the fixed rate of 300 fils per cubic metre to truck drivers.

The government also sent police officers and officials from the ministries of water, interior and supply to monitor the well-water market and put public tankers into service, selling water to the public at the fixed price of JD1.250 per cubic metre instead of between JD7-JD8 per cubic metre.

Other official water monitors said police procedures were forcing truckers to queue up to four hours, hampering their daily transport capacity to water-thirsty citizens.

Many said truck drivers were refusing to abide by the fixed price.

"Some claim they have their own contracts with firms, foreign embassies and leading hotels who are willing to pay any price and, hence, they do not need to sell under anyone's supervision," said a police officer guarding another well.

On other occasions, orders to ferry water supplies to influential government officials and families "at the expense of other requests" were angering well owners.

"Such requests create problems because truck drivers will have to queue up for hours before they are able to fill their tankers," said one well owner.

"Therefore, truck drivers will have to charge more money to cover the time lost."

In the eyes of many truck drivers and well owners, affluent private

citizens are also to blame for the thriving water-related black market.

"Many rich people encourage truck drivers to ask for high prices," said one driver. "My truck is booked for the next week."

One of his clients offered to pay JD120 for six cubic metres of water, he said.

"Why shouldn't I take the money if there is someone willing to pay it?" he asked.

Despite government assurances that the water running in domestic taps is not contaminated with any health-threatening microbes, people are still flocking to stock up on spring water, and have virtually wiped out stores' stocks of mineral water.

"I prefer buying spring water at five times the fixed price, rather than drinking tap water that could jeopardise my family's lives," said one Sweifish resident.

Press ponders future of investigative reporting after approval of draft law

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — If the press can claim one victory this year, it must be its role in exposing the recent water scandal and the government's failure to present the truth to Jordanians and leading the campaign for yesterday's resignation of the minister of water and irrigation.

But the Lower House's endorsement of the draft press and publications law yesterday could render the press unable to ever play such a role again, journalists said yesterday.

"The press proved itself powerful enough to encourage our parliamentarians to investigate this, publish reports and insist on an independent committee to determine the responsible parties," said one seasoned journalist. "The new law won't give any matter like this the necessary prominence, because it has too many limitations."

Several articles in the draft, which has yet to gain approval at the Upper House, could mean that a matter of such import will never see the front page of any newspaper.

For example, one article prohibits the publication of any information on an ongoing investigation, court case, or crime committed in the Kingdom unless permission is obtained from the prosecutor general. Another article prohibits the publication of any news, article, analyses, information, reports, speeches, pictures or drawings that may "harm national security" or "harm the dignity, personal freedom or reputation of individual."

The law does not qualify these restrictions.

The irony, the journalist pointed out, is that Parliament stabbed journalists in the back while shooting itself in the

foot.

"The press supported Parliament all the way, and without the press, Parliament could not have acted in the same manner. Journalists helped Parliament exercise its authority to take action against public officials," he said.

At the same time, Parliament will have no channel through which to measure public opinion, nor will it have a tool through which to expose the government.

"Under the 1993 law, journalists could at least put up a fight, and this [issue of polluted water] has really been a fight," he said.

The draft press and publications, introduced by the government in June, was regarded by most of the press as a penal code for journalists rather than a piece of legislation intended to widen the scope of press and public freedoms.

The Lower House National Guidance Committee (NGC) toned down or cancelled some of the most draconian articles, but journalists yesterday said the basic framework and spirit of the law remain in place.

"My initial reaction is that they left the government's structure of the draft in place," said one seasoned editor. "The structure was such that no matter how hard Parliament tried to change this law, the starting point was very tough."

"There were four members in the [NGC] who were very well aware of this and knew that with such a starting point, their ability to retreat [from the original law] was limited, and that is why they wanted to return [the law to the government]," he explained.

"In this case, the committee was proven right. It also showed that Parliament as a whole was not more democratic than the committee. I don't know how the press will operate now."

The irony, said the first journalist, is that the government which self-tailored the legislation to suit its specific needs is rumoured to be changing shortly, but the law, if enacted as is by the Senate, will be permanent.

"We will be totally dependent on any new government's interpretation of this law," he said, referring to numerous vaguely worded articles that leave substantial leeway for liberal interpretation.

Journalists still have an opportunity to lobby senators, but do not feel that efforts there will be very successful. The Upper House traditionally has not been known to make much more than minor adjustments to any legislation.

There is another point too. "We have been fighting for more than a year," said Nabil Sherif, chief editor of the Arabic daily Al-Dustour, in a recent interview with the Jordan Times.

The battle for the press, he said, has been fought on two fronts and began more than a year ago when the government introduced temporary amendments to the 1993 Press and Publications Law, subsequently overturned at the Higher Court of Justice. Since then, journalists have been busy staying off a new press and publications law while trying to retain control of the Jordan Press Association, the professional association most susceptible to government interference out of the country's 13 syndicates. Last month, Parliament endorsed a new law for the association that paved the way for membership of employees of the government-owned radio and television.

"Journalists have simply grown tired and worn out," said Sherif. "The battle isn't over, but people are just too tired."

Newspaper editor recovering from injuries sustained in attack

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The chief editor of the opposition weekly Al-Mithaq on Sunday said he was recovering from injuries he sustained when three unidentified assailants attacked him Saturday night near his home in Jabal Hussein.

Nahed Hattar, a vehement critic of past and current government officials, said the men attacked him when he arrived at his house with his wife and his eight-year-old child.

"The three men approached me after I got out of my car and asked me if I was Nahed Hattar," he told the Jordan Times. "When I said 'yes,' they got out batons from plastic bags placed under their arms and beat me on the head more than once until I lost consciousness."

Hattar, a leftist who made an unsuccessful bid for a Par-

liament seat in 1992, said he could not identify the three men. He said a fourth waited for them in a taxi.

However, his wife provided the police with the description of one of the alleged assailants.

She said the three fled the scene in the taxi after she started to scream, drawing the attention of passers by.

An eyewitness who saw the attack from his rooftop said the three men had been waiting for Hattar for a while before he arrived. Another eyewitness managed to follow the taxi and read its licence plate and name of the company and handed the information over to the police.

A police official, however, said there was no such operating taxi company registered in the whole district of Amman and that the number the eyewitness provided did not exist.

The official added that search for the four suspects is going on.

"I handed in a complaint to the police, accusing several sides of being behind this attack since there is no relation or prior knowledge between me and the assailants," Hattar said.

In a statement issued Sunday morning, Hattar accused a former prime minister, the PLO's Fateh movement, a government minister and the Israeli embassy in Amman of being behind the attack.

"I accuse all these sides together and individually with this cowardly attack, which constitutes a clear message against all my critical writings and activities," Hattar said.

He said the recent critical articles that he published in his newspaper's recent editions must have angered all those parties.

Hattar has appeared in court many times in recent years, accused of violating the press law and of lese majeste, of which he was found innocent last November.

Advisories against outdoor activity during heat wave

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Health and the Civil Defence Department (CDD) have both issued public warnings advising against outdoor activity, especially by children and people with high blood pressure, diabetes or heart conditions, between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. to avoid health problems related to the current heat wave.

The local press yesterday quoted the CDD as report-

ing that 13 citizens suffered heat strokes over the past 72 hours and were being treated at various hospitals.

The CDD advised construction workers to avoid exposure to the sun as much as possible and wear hats if outdoor work is necessary. It also cautioned the public to take extra precaution against fires and to refrain from throwing cigarette butts onto dry

grass.

The Ministry of Health advised citizens to wear light clothes, drink additional amounts of water and avoid eating heavy meals.

A senior Ministry of Agriculture official said the ministry has not yet received any reports about damage to agricultural products but advised farmers, especially those growing crops under plastic

cover, to increase the amount of irrigation water.

The Meteorology Department said temperatures measuring six to nine degrees Celsius above average are expected to hit various parts of the country as the heat wave continues over the next few days.

The heat wave, which resulted from a hot air mass originating over the Indian subcontinent, is also affecting countries neigh-

boring Jordan in the eastern Mediterranean region, according to the department.

Daytime temperatures in the Amman area are expected to remain around 40 degrees Celsius, dropping to a low of 27 degrees at night. The Meteorology Department has not forecast an end to the heat wave, which has affected the Kingdom for more than two weeks.

What's going on

LECTURES

* "Petra — Great Temple" by Dr. Martha Joukowsky at the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR), near the University of Jordan at 7:00 p.m. (Tel. 534-6117).

* "The Educational Development in Jordan Between Theory and Application" by former Minister of Education Dr. Munther Al Masri (in Arabic) at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 7:00 p.m.

FILMS

* Two films entitled "Sparrow" and "Bumper Special, Rosie & Jim" at the British Council, Jabal Amman on Tuesday Aug. 11 at 7:00 p.m. and Wednesday Aug. 12 at 6:00 p.m., respectively.

EXHIBITION

* Photo exhibition on old buildings of Salt entitled "Engravings on the Wings of Time" at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Aug. 13.

Cabinet approves Jordanian-German financing agreement

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet has approved an agreement which Jordan plans to sign with Germany on financing a project to draw water from Deir Alla in the Jordan Valley to Dabouk, near Amman.

Under the agreement, the German Development Bank will grant Jordan DM44 million for the project.

The Cabinet, which held a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Saturday in Jerash, also approved a water cooperation agreement with the German government concerning the installation of a water network at Wadi Musa, close to the ancient Nabataean city of Petra

in southern Jordan.

The German government had earlier earmarked a DM8.5 million loan to finance the project as part of Bonn's technical assistance programme to Jordan for 1998.

The Cabinet approved a Jordanian-Croatian agreement on encouraging and protecting investments and authorised Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Hani Mulki to sign it.

The Cabinet also approved plans by the Ministry of Culture and Youth to hold the Seventh Amman Cultural Festival from Oct. 5-8 at the Royal Cultural Centre in Amman.

The festival is expected to shed light on plastic art in the Kingdom.

Jerash Festival finale draws huge turnout

By Ahmed Naser
Special to the Jordan Times

JERASH — Deputising for Her Majesty Queen Noor, Senator Leila Sharaf extinguished the Jerash Festival torch Saturday night after pop-singer Abdul Majid Abdullah, whose performances drew a third of the festival's total attendants, gave his third and final show at the South Theatre here.

A breakdown by observers and officials of Abdullah's audience indicated that more than around half were Gulf expatriates, some of whom have been known to follow Abdullah, a Saudi in his thirties, from city to city for his performances.

Gulf returnees came in second, while Jordanians who have never left the Kingdom have also been smitten by Abdullah, whose popularity has cassette shops in Amman



placing numerous orders for his albums.

A noticeable feature of Abdullah's performance were the legions of young Gulf women dancing to his music, something they would not have been able to do in their mother countries, because of either strict Islamic Sharia or social norms.

But the festival also featured other stars, who either returned to Jerash for a second visit or were here on their first.

Arab nationalist singer and oudist Marcel Khalifeh, from Lebanon, managed to perform all of his songs aided by three

musicians — another oudist, a cellist and a violinist. Khalifeh usually requires an orchestra for the majority of his old nationalist songs.

Among songs featured for the first time in theatre performances were "Father, I'm Your Son Joseph" and oldies like "A Song In My Mind."

Ummamah Khalil, a Lebanese singer performing with Khalifeh, managed to lull the audience into complete silence with her voice during her two a cappella performances.

Others, like heartthrob Diana Haddad, performing at Jerash for the first time, christened the festival with her two performances.

Bard Samih Qasim made a surprise appearance with a performance of his work "The Home Opera" by the Nazareth-based Mawlaw group.

Behind the scenes, TV, radio and print media correspondents

scrambled during intermissions to interview performers for what were at times live on-the-spot broadcasts, and on the whole better than international coverage last year.

But in spite of the event's smooth and enhanced organisation, the attendance was considerably lower than the average draw of 30,000 per evening during last year's festival, according to festival officials.

The low turnout this year has been blamed on a number of combined issues, namely the water crisis, the economic situation and His Majesty King Hussein's health.

But the main reason for the festival's low turnout was that most of the performing groups received late invitations, precluding an extensive build up ahead of their performances, according to both officials and performers.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Moscow airport hostages freed, official says

MOSCOW (AFP) — A hostage crisis at a Moscow airport ended Sunday with all 97 people held on board the TU-154 freed safe and sound, airport security spokesman Maxim Tarasenko said. "There was no assault, nor any violence," Tarasenko said, adding that it was unsure whether there had been any hijackers on board. "A flight attendant found a note on the floor during the flight demanding that \$100,000 be left in the plane's toilets after landing.... She gave it to the pilot," the spokesman said. The note carried a threat that the plane would be blown up. The money was prepared, but no hijacker came forward, Tarasenko indicated. Authorities had not ruled out the possibility that the incident was a bad joke or that the note had been left before the plane took off on the Irkutsk-Tyumen-Moscow run.

Havel getting better

PRAGUE (AP) — President Vaclav Havel's condition improved Sunday, but doctors said the Czech leader may remain in intensive care for another week. Havel's personal physician, Ilya Kotik, said the 61-year-old president is still breathing with the occasional aid of a respirator, but that his pneumonia was subsiding thanks to new antibiotics begun last week. "The president is without fever and feels good," Kotik said. But Kotik cautioned that his pulmonary X-rays and blood tests were not yet normal. "There is still time before we celebrate victory," Havel's wife, Dagmar, said he is watching movies and reading newspapers, and communicates through written notes. "I hope we will be able to go out for a little walk, soon," she said. In April, the Czech leader suffered a ruptured colon while vacationing in the Austrian Alps and underwent an emergency colostomy, an operation in which doctors form an artificial opening in the colon for expelling waste. On July 26, doctors in Prague closed the colostomy and Havel subsequently developed pneumonia on Aug. 3. As with Havel's previous operations, breathing problems and infections have hindered his recovery. Havel has been hospitalised five times since December 1996, when a third of his lung and a cancerous tumour were removed. The Czech presidency is a largely ceremonial position, so while Havel is hospitalised there is no need for his powers to be transferred to someone else.

China dissident's mother visits U.S.

BEIJING (R) — The mother and sister of democracy activist Wang Dan left China Sunday for the United States for the first family reunion since Wang went into exile in April, a family friend said. Wang Lingyun, the dissident's mother, accompanied by Wang's sister and nephew, left Beijing on a China Eastern Airlines flight to San Francisco, the friend said. Wang Dan, 29, a student leader of the 1989 Tiananmen pro-democracy movement, was released on medical parole and sent into exile in April in a gesture by Beijing prior to U.S. President Bill Clinton's June 25-July 3 visit to China. Wang's mother has said she hoped her son, who served more than five years in jail in two separate sentences in connection with his advocacy of democracy, could one day return to China. It was not clear if Wang, who has been studying at Harvard University near Boston, would meet his mother and sister in San Francisco, the friend said. Wang's parole and exile to the United States followed that of veteran democracy campaigner Wei Jingsheng five months earlier. Wei's brother last month travelled to the United States to meet him, family sources said.

Fossett over South Atlantic in world-trip quest

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. millionaire Steve Fossett soared over the South Atlantic Sunday in his fourth attempt to be the first to circle the globe non-stop in a hot air balloon. The eccentric balloonist was almost 900 miles east-southeast of Mar Del Plata, Argentina as he began the third day of his trip, according to the Internet web site run by Fossett's mission control centre. At 8 a.m. (11:00 a.m.) GMT Fossett was floating 6,927 metres above sea level, and travelling at a speed of 63 kilometres per hour. At that time Fossett and his balloon, the "Solo Spirit," had travelled a total distance of 2,809 kilometres from his starting point in Mendoza, Argentina. The balloon was located at 44 degrees 08' south and 41 degrees 49' west, according to Fossett's mission control at Washington University in Saint Louis, Missouri, in the midwestern United States. Fossett took off from a Mendoza football stadium late Friday. Unlike his earlier attempts when he rode the winter jet stream of the northern hemisphere, Fossett decided this time to fly with currents from the southern hemisphere, largely over water. Fossett will be flying over only about five countries in this attempt, reducing the possibility of nations denying him rights to use their air space, which plagued his previous flights.

China boots save mine clearers on Vietnam border

BEIJING (R) — A Chinese soldier was thrown high in the air when he stepped on a landmine near China's border with Vietnam and survived unscathed thanks to his boots, the People's Daily said Sunday. A Chinese military university is testing out special protective footwear for mine clearers in its southwestern province of Yunnan, the site of thousands of mines left over from China's 1979 border war with Vietnam, the Communist Party mouthpiece said. "Since Yunnan border guards started the second large-scale mine clearance, not one of several hundred soldiers and officers has been injured or killed," it quoted Colonel Li Zhilun, commander of Yunnan mine clearance troops, as saying. "The credit must go to these new anti-mine boots." The People's Daily did not provide details.

Chinese soldiers have been clearing landmines from an area of more than 100 sq km in Yunnan and 200,000 sq metres in neighbouring Guangxi province. Vietnam and China fought a bloody border war in 1979 which Beijing launched to punish Hanoi for its invasion of Cambodia a few months earlier. Frontier hostilities continued for more than a decade, and the two neighbours only restored official relations in 1991. China and Vietnam are among nations who have refused involvement in an international treaty banning landmines, saying they continue to need mines for defensive purposes. There are some 100 million landmines lying buried or hidden in 64 countries around the world. Some 25,000 people a year are killed or maimed by mines left when wars end.



Newlyweds CNN correspondent Christiane Amanpour (left) and U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin leave the Bracciano church following their wedding (Reuters photo)

Amanpour weds Rubin

ROME (R) — Star CNN correspondent Christiane Amanpour and U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin tied the knot Saturday at a lakeside Renaissance church near Rome.

Iranian-born Amanpour, 40, who has reported from Bosnia and many other world trouble spots for the television network, wore white for her marriage to 38-year-old Rubin on

the banks of Lake Bracciano. After a Catholic service at the church, a Jewish ceremony was held at the nearby Odescalchi palace.

John Kennedy Jr. and his wife Carolyn Bessette were at the wedding, but hopes of a star-studded guest line-up were disappointed: celebrities such as Jane Fonda and her husband Ted Turner, founder of CNN, did not turn up as expected.

"Italy is a wonderful country to get married. I'm happy to be here. Christiane has chosen the right place," Kennedy said as he arrived at the church.

Rubin's boss, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, had flown to Italy for the occasion but returned suddenly to Washington Friday after the deadly bombing attacks on U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Kohl plotting his comeback

BONN (R) — Chancellor Helmut Kohl returns to work from his holidays Monday, seven weeks before Germany's general election, to plot with his allies how he can ease away his rival Gerhard Schroeder's shrinking lead.

Apparently jaded by 16 years of uninterrupted Kohl, voters have put Social Democrat Schroeder well ahead for months.

But most recent opinion polls show the gap closing to between three and five percentage points, though political analysts say Mr. Kohl's chances of overtaking his sick opponent at this late stage are slim.

Mr. Schroeder, back from a telegraphic visit to U.S. President Bill Clinton, said Friday that Mr. Kohl was a spent force with no new ideas but warned that he was still far from beaten.

"Helmut Kohl is a dangerous campaign opponent," the 54-year-old challenger said. "I can only warn our supporters it would be a mistake at this point to say 'we've got him beat'."

Kohl and fellow Christian Democrat (CDU) leaders gathered Monday at party headquarters for the first time after their summer holidays. Just across the road the Social Democrats (SPD) will do the same as the election campaign gathers pace.

Germany's veteran leader, whose masterminding in 1990 of reunification no longer assures him the adulation of the electorate, is still hoping that the economy and employment will improve in time for him to win back their gratitude.

"We have fewer jobs, more vacancies and in West Germany more jobs than a year ago," he told Welt am Sonntag newspaper, predicting that unemployment — the biggest issue in Germany — would drop below the key four million mark in September.

Seasonally adjusted unemployment fell slightly in July, officials said last week, but unlikelihood for Kohl German media watch the unadjusted figure which showed the first rise in months to 10.7 per cent from 10.5 per cent in June.

Kohl, 68, also insisted in his interview that the election on Sept. 27 would not produce a "grand coalition" with his party playing second fiddle to the SPD.

"Let no one be deceived — there will be no grand coalition. The alternatives are clear," he said.

These were a centrist government as now, led by the CDU with its Bavarian sister party, the CSU, and the free-market Free Democrats, or a coalition of the SPD and ecologist Greens, maybe including East

Germany's PDS, the reformed Communists.

Much depends on whether the smaller parties — the Greens, the PDS and the Free Democrats — manage to win the minimum 5 per cent of the vote needed to get into parliament.

Kohl, fighting for a record fifth term in office, has said he will step down if there is a grand coalition.

He renewed his support Sunday for CDU parliamentary leader Wolfgang Schaueble to succeed him, after Schaueble's wife Ingeborg publicly doubted if her husband, in a wheelchair since a gunman attacked him in 1990, would cope.

"He is a boon to the Christian Democrats and... I would like him to be my successor," the chancellor told Welt am Sonntag.

Kohl accuses the SPD of trying to make a grand coalition look more likely in order to placate voters scared of the more radical Green policies, such as a trebling of the price of petrol and the disbanding of the NATO alliance.

A commentator in Welt am Sonntag, a conservative newspaper sympathetic to Kohl, branded the Greens as anti-technology and the PDS as unreconstructed East German Communists who had been "Stalin's willing enforcers".

Taleban pressure foes near Kabul

KABUL (AP) — Reports of fighting Sunday appeared to contradict claims by the Taleban that they were in charge of Mazar-i-Sharif, the last major Afghan city outside the extremist Islamic militia's undisputed control.

The anti-Taleban alliance, meanwhile, was also under pressure near Kabul in the Panjshir Valley, where ousted military chief Ahmad Shah Masood has struggled to hold ground since he and President Burhanuddin Rabbani lost the capital two years ago.

Indian-based Afghan Ambassador Masood Khalili, who has remained loyal to Rabbani, said street fighting was escalating Sunday in Mazar-i-Sharif, some 300 kilometres north of Kabul, a day after Taleban fighters entered it.

Khalili also accused Taleban fighters of killing civilians, targeting Shiite Muslims in particular. The Taleban, like most Afghans, adhere to the Sunni sect of Islam.

The anti-Taleban coalition was regrouping, Khalili said.

"God knows what will happen in the next 24 hours." The coalition's key members are Masood, ethnic Uzbek warlord Rashid Dostum, and the Shiite Hezb-i-Wahadat militia. Dostum and Masood were directing the fighting Sunday from Pulkhumri, 200 kilometres southeast of Mazar-i-Sharif, said Hezb-i-Wahadat spokesman Azizullah Shashaq.

Shashaq, speaking by satellite phone from south of Mazar-i-Sharif in Bamyan province, said coalition forces held the airport on the eastern

edge of Mazar-i-Sharif. He reported fighting near the airport Sunday, and added he had heard of heavy fighting to the north, in Kunduz province. Shashaq had no details.

The reports of fighting could not be immediately confirmed.

But a fierce defence of Mazar-i-Sharif had been expected. Its loss would be a severe blow to an opposition backed into a dwindling corner of northern Afghanistan, and a boost to the Taleban's four-year-old campaign to impose their strict interpretation of Islamic rule on all of Afghanistan.

The Taleban, whose name means "students of Islam," emerged in 1994, pledging to bring peace to Afghanistan after years of civil war. In the areas they control, the Taleban have barred girls from school, confined most women to their homes, forbade all music except religious songs, and staged frequent public mutilations of thieves and executions of murderers.

After heavy overnight fighting, the Taleban Sunday had advanced 15 kilometres along the New Road Pass, 40 kilometres northeast of Kabul. Taleban Commander Haji Ibrahim said retreating opposition troops left behind the bodies of five fighters, while 10 of his men were injured in a land mine explosion.

"We plan to launch a massive attack soon" on Masood's stronghold, Ibrahim said.

The new Taleban position outside Kabul put them just 20 kilometres from Bagram, a

Russian-built air base that is the biggest in Afghanistan. Masood's forces have been unable to use the air base because it was within striking distance of Taleban rockets.

An opposition rocket landed on the perimeter of the Taleban-held Kabul airport Sunday morning. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

In some parts of Afghanistan, the Taleban have bribed military commanders to surrender or counted on being welcomed by local residents eager to embrace anyone promising peace or to accept the Taleban as their ethnic brothers.

But Mazar-i-Sharif is inhabited mostly by ethnic Uzbeks and Tajiks, while the Taleban, like most other Afghans, are Pashtuns. The Taleban are Sunni, while the Hezb-i-Wahadat militia that calls Mazar-i-Sharif its stronghold is made up of Shiites. Residents resented Taleban attempts last year to impose their version of Islam on Mazar-i-Sharif.

Last May, the Taleban entered Mazar-i-Sharif at the invitation of a warlord who had turned on his anti-Taleban allies. The warlord then turned again — allegiance-switching has been a hallmark of Afghanistan's years of civil war — and the Taleban took heavy casualties while being driven out.

"Last year, we were invited in. But this time, we burned the mountains," said Taleban spokesman Abdul Manam Niyazi, using an expression for heavy fighting while speaking Saturday by satellite phone from Mazar-i-Sharif.

Guinea-Bissau maintains cease-fire and new talks set

LISBON (AP) — Guinea-Bissau's government and a rebel military faction have agreed to extend their 2-week cease-fire, and scheduled another round of talks, news agencies reported Sunday.

The next round of talks to resolve the two-month-old conflict in the West African nation were scheduled for Aug. 18 and 19, the Portuguese news agency Lusa reported.

Delegations from President Joao Bernardo Vieira's government and the rebel faction loyal to Brig. Ansumane Mane met Saturday. These talks, like

those that led to the July 26 cease-fire, took place on a frigate moored off the coast of the former Portuguese colony.

The next round will be held on the Cape Verde archipelago.

Guinea-Bissau's peace negotiations are being brokered by a delegation from the Committee of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, or CPLP.

The CPLP is made up of Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde and Sao Tome and Principe. Mane attempted a coup in June, after he was dismissed as arms forces

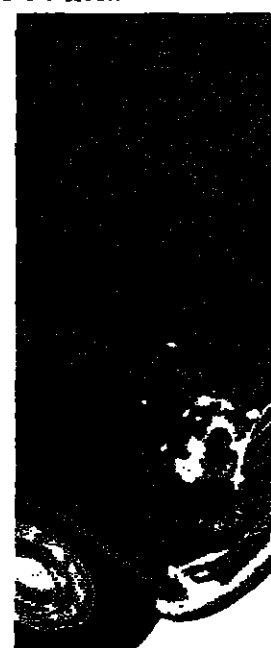
chief for allegedly running arms to Senegalese separatists.

The rebel officers accused President Vieira of rampant corruption and demanded he step down.

Fierce fighting between the renegade soldiers and troops loyal to Vieira — the latter supported by reinforcements from Senegal and the Republic of Guinea — triggered an exodus from the capital, Bissau.

Relief agencies recently warned of a possible humanitarian crisis because food and medical aid was not reaching the displaced population.

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Sound policy

DEPUTY PRIME Minister and Foreign Minister Jawad Anani's current visit to Iran aims at initiating a new era of bilateral dialogue and cooperation, while also paving the way for broader coordination among all Muslim states. Anani's talks with Iranian President Mohammad Khatami yesterday followed ongoing contacts between the two countries and HRH Crown Prince Hassan's significant visit to Tehran last October.

Needless to say, the mutual benefits of enhanced economic and political relations would be enormous.

But also, at a regional level, the Middle East has little hope to develop if Muslim and Arab countries continue to be divided, or worse, at war with each other.

With this visit, during which Anani delivered an invitation from His Majesty King Hussein to President Khatami to visit the Kingdom, Jordan is clearly extending its hand to the Iranian people.

Jordan's message, to Iran as well as to all other countries in the region, is that no difference could ever be so wide as not to be overcome with genuine dialogue and understanding. It is high time to move on and leave behind old conflicts, allegations and recriminations, if we want to overcome the challenges ahead.

The ongoing crisis in the Middle East peace process and the threats posed to the Arab and Muslim worlds by the policies of the current Israeli government require that all of us start a new chapter in our relations.

After yesterday's meeting with Anani, President Khatami blasted the Israeli government, describing it as "the greatest enemy of Islam and humanity."

Palestinians, Jordanians, all Arabs and Muslims are well aware of the catastrophe that the policies of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promise to bring to this region.

Our shared criticism of Israel should thus provide the basis for a constructive dialogue and concerted effort to right the wrongs perpetrated by Israel and demand that a just and comprehensive peace be achieved.

Herein the voice of Iran, as a powerful regional player, can strengthen this cause, because as a neighbouring Islamic nation it has demonstrated that it would support the Arab drive for justice and genuine peace.

Economic Review

Saving the environment through lower tariffs

Dr. Yusuf Mansur

REINVENTING IS a difficult undertaking, especially when the original invention is lingering around, gawking at the would-be-inventor and daring him not to repeat the past. The Jordanian economy is not an exception.

At every turn, whether it is the privatisation of the Jordan Telecommunications Corporation, or the dismantling of the old general subsidy system, the old guard keep tugging at those who want to advance the economy, tossing monkey wrenches in the works, all in an effort to halt progress.

The same can be said for endeavours to decrease pollution, especially air and scenic pollution from old and unmaintained automobiles. Lowering tariffs on auto vehicles could be the required solution, but, quoting Albert Einstein, "We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if mankind is to survive."

Let's review some of the data. Over the last 10 years, the cost of importing oil has averaged 7.9 per cent of GDP or 10-15 per cent of imports per year. In other words, oil imports have made up almost half of the revenue from exports. Between 1993-98 cumulative spending on energy was JD560 million with the demand for oil expected to rise at 4 per cent per year. The transportation sector uses up 40 per cent of all this demand followed by industry at 32 per cent and the household sector by 18 per cent.

Consumption of oil derivatives grew by 4.3 per cent for the period 1993-97, rising to 4,245 thousand tonnes, which comprised 533 thousand tonnes of benzene, in 1997.

It is therefore, easy to discern that Jordan's energy bill continues to rise at a pace that is higher than that of the growth rate, and as the brilliant Benjamin Franklin said 255 years ago, "Since fuel is becoming so expensive, and will of course grow scarcer and dearer, any new proposal for saving the fuel may at least be thought worth considering." (He said this long before OPEC, the rise of oil prices in the seventies, the fall of the eighties and the present exceed-

ingly low oil prices. Judging the trend of oil prices over the past 255 years, however, the adroitness of his statement is demonstrated.) One way to lower the oil import bill is to actually lower the customs levied on automobiles!

This would encourage people to abandon their inefficient old cars and opt for newer models that have higher fuel burning efficiency and therefore create less pollution, which in turn would help contribute to lower carbon dioxide emissions in the atmosphere. In 1995, worldwide carbon emissions from burning fossil fuel reached 6.1 billion tonnes, 100 million tonnes higher than the level of 1991. Furthermore, the continuous creation of carbon dioxide is boosting its concentration in the atmosphere and trapping heat. The average global temperature in 1995 was 15.39° Celsius higher than it was 130 years ago. This average increased from 15.38° in 1990.

(Current temperatures in Jordan make one remember Walter Mathau's rhythmic rendition, "We're having a heat wave, a tropical heat wave." Oddly enough, he sang this while shovelling snow from his driveway.)

Moreover, better cars would make for better and safer driving. The number of accidents in Jordan rose from 12,433 in 1980 to 39,005 in 1997. During the last five years 2,481 people were killed and 69,088 were injured.

And while the average for advanced countries is one fatality for ten thousand vehicles, Jordan's average is 16 people for every 10,000 vehicles. Further, Jordan loses JD100 million a year (almost one third of the foreign aid received last year) due to traffic accidents. (The public transportation sector, which should have been privatised years ago, is responsible for 20 per cent of these accidents.)

Although a decreased fuel bill, less pollution and a lower vehicle fatality rate may result from having newer vehicles on the road, if tariffs were lowered on automobiles addi-

tional benefits could also be secured such as: less spending on spare parts, decreased scenic pollution of the Jordanian landscape, time savings due to less car breakdowns and delays, greater mobility of labour as people find it easier to travel long distances to work, greater tourism expenditures by Jordanians as they become less dependent on public transportation (which is highly cumbersome and unreliable), less pressure on Amman for infrastructure and a more even distribution of the population throughout the Kingdom, less distortion in real incomes between those who drive cars with special licence plates (yellow, red, blue), which reportedly stand at 30,000 vehicles and those who don't, etc.

If the benefits are so many, why aren't customs, including the equating exorbitant sales tax, not lowered? The argument that keeps emerging is that the public sector cannot afford to lose the revenues generated from customs (JD238 million per year between 1992-1996). However, this argument is based on the false premise that lowering tariffs would not increase imports of vehicles, which is surely the case. This is otherwise known as the Law of Demand, one of the very few absolute laws in economics. Furthermore, if the percentage increase in purchases exceeds the percentage decrease in tariffs, i.e., the case of an elastic demand, economic theory and basic calculus assert that revenues would increase.

Clearly a scientific study could elegantly demonstrate that a win-win situation could arise from lowering tariffs on some items such as auto vehicles, which could also serve as a pilot or predecessor to several other highly useful and relevant studies.

But most importantly it would allow decision-makers to make more and better decisions. Alas there is no such study yet, maybe because reinventing requires a substantially new manner of thinking. Let us not wait too long.

'Brotherhood's new leadership to move into new arenas with view towards continuity, compromise and moderation'

By Ibrahim Gharaibeh

THE LATEST Muslim Brotherhood elections were a major political and national event. They were carefully and seriously followed by the media, diplomatic missions and different political bodies, since the Islamic movement is regarded as the most important political mainstream supported by at least one third of Jordanians.

Both politically and socially, the Muslim Brotherhood represents the middle class, including university students and professional union members.

The movement is an important stabilising factor being politically and socially balanced and including within its members citizens of both Palestinian and Transjordanian origins. Its stands and interactions could be considered a social barometer reflecting social dynamics and developments.

Most public political debates during the past few weeks argued whether the latest internal elections signalled any real change in the Brotherhood's leadership, programmes and stands.

Many observers thought that the movement would move towards more conservative stands, which was something expected in light of the collapsing peace process.

But that was not the case.

The movement, however, might move towards new programmes, due to the social and economic changes resulting from the privatisation process and the great adjustments occurring in most countries regarding the change in the role and nature of governments.

Many issues which were previously only envisioned in governments' development plans started to gain great importance among the public, such as the environment, family protection, human rights, drug trafficking, social security and education.

Indeed these issues will represent a major and important part of the movement's future programmes, especially now that the newly elected leadership is committed and willing to

adopt them, although the larger base of the movement is not yet very familiar with such issues.

A broad debate is currently in process within the movement pertaining to the activation and development of the Islamic concept of "Dawa" (missioning), thus penetrating new horizons.

It seems that the new leadership will gradually move towards these ideas, but it will also maintain a certain continuity with the past, due to the transitional nature of the present situation and circumstances, as well as its tendency towards compromise and moderate stands.

Three main streams were competing for the movement's leadership and tried to secure a majority in the recent Shura Council elections.

One of them, the moderate stream, is the group that led political and parliamentary participation in the stage of political openness post-1989. It included prominent figures who tended to strategically ally themselves with the regime and successive governments, such as Ishaq Farhan, Abdul Latif Arabiyat, Abdullah Akaleh, Hamzeh Mansour, Abdul Raheem Ekour, and Adnan Jajouli.

The second group, which is considered the right wing of the movement and led the Brotherhood during the period 1978-1990, includes Hamman Sa'id, Muhammad Abu Faris, Qandeel Shaker, and Ibrahim Khreisat.

A third group, "the centrists," is a moderate stream mainly addressing the Brotherhood's youth and field leaders, and it started to play quite an increasingly influential role since 1990. Its main figures are: Imad Abu Diyab, Jameel Abu Baker, Salem Falahat, Haytham Abdul Ragheb, Sa'ud Abu Mahfouz, and Na'el Masalha.

The results of these elections have shown that the movement is completely in favour of this third stream, thus excluding almost completely the other two groups, which have long been rivals.

The moderate stream was previously the main feature of the movement, but the intense

polarisation between the two rival factions in the late 1980s resulted in attempts to drag the whole movement towards two contradictory positions.

The latest elections, on the other hand, have put the movement back on its original track, one to which the movement has been committed since its founding in the mid 1940s.

The traditional stream, "the doves," were defeated in the first round of the elections, when most of its leaders and supporters failed to secure a seat in the Shura Council.

The right-wing "hawks," on the other hand, were successful in clinching a considerable number of Council seats.

The hawks initially attempted to place Khreisat on the seat of the overall leader, but he was defeated in the Shura elections.

They then tried to push at the top of the movement Sa'id as deputy overall leader, and Abu Faris, Shaker, and Kofahi as executive committee members. But none of them succeeded.

Two successful candidates were instead Daoud Kojak and Haytham Abdul Ragheb, who became members in the seven-member executive committee. They were initially considered to belong to the right wing, but they never really operated as such, being instead rather close to the general observer — the moderate Abdul Majeed Thneibat — and the executive office.

Their electoral victory was also due to the moderates' support.

Abdul Hameed Qudah, another newly-elected member in the executive committee, is considered to be close to the "doves," although he is pretty much different in his attitudes and organisational stands.

Due to its composition, the executive office is expected to be in great harmony, able to work collectively despite its members' intellectual differences. It represents in a balanced manner all the movements' different streams and groups.

Moreover, the new leadership will greatly benefit from Thneibat's ability to work and

tune with all movements' figures and groups. He was first elected as the movements' general observer in 1994, previous to that he was deputy general observer. Born in Karak in 1947, he is a lawyer.

The July 10-11 elections for the Brotherhood's executive committee confirmed previous expectations that the movement will turn to address the national, dawa, and development issues, while at the same time maintaining its moderate track.

It is not expected that the movement will witness any dramatic detours in its policies and stands, but the newly elected centrists will surely keep the movement away from permanent alliance with government.

As for the hawks, they will most likely forge ahead with their demand for educational reforms, become politically more passive and engage in verbal confrontation with the government.

The traditional "doves" will instead forge ahead with their belief that the only chance for the movement's success is active participation in political life and Parliament.

Given this scenario, it is likely that the movement will witness in the coming four years some internal debate, since it will be entering a new phase — and so will the surrounding environment.

The Brotherhood will find itself compelled to react with new tools and means that have largely been out of its grasp and have never been used before.

But the new centrist leadership shows enthusiasm and vows to go through this endeavour, notwithstanding the scepticism of the other two groups.

The writer is an expert on the Muslim Brotherhood movement and the Islamic Action Front Party in Jordan. He has published several articles and books on the subject and is the editor of Al 'Ummah magazine. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Double standards: Burma and Cambodia

By Gwynne Dyer

"AT PRESENT, the axe-handle traitors, who are dependent on outside power, instead of joining hands with the government in building genuine democracy, are committing subversive acts," said Burmese Government Minister Saw Tun on August 5. But it's obvious just from his choice of words that this man represents a paranoid and repressive regime with its back to the wall.

The 'axe-handle traitors' (it may mean more in Burmese) are Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi and her fellow leaders of the National League for Democracy (NLD), who won a landslide victory in the 1990 elections that the country's current military rulers over-confidently called after the bloody 1988 coup. The junta ignored the NLD's victory and put Suu Kyi under house arrest for six years, but Burma's one democratic election just won't go away.

This month, the 10th anniversary of the 1988 massacres in Rangoon, Suu Kyi has set a August 21 deadline for Burma's military rulers finally to convene the parliament that was elected eight years ago — and she is getting solid support from outside.

"The United States condemns the

in Burma on July 30, and the six days of deprivation to which she was subjected at the hands of the so-called government there," said State Department spokesman James Rubin on July 31. (She was blockaded in her car while trying to visit rural supporters, and then forcibly returned to Rangoon.)

Rubin then urged Burma's military regime to stop harassing its critics, free jailed members of parliament, and open a dialogue with both the NLD and Burma's beleaguered minorities. It was a fine, robust defence of the Burmese people's rights, and many countries in the region and around the world echoed it.

How different from international attitudes to Cambodia, where they have just finished counting the votes in an election whose sole purpose was to confer legitimacy on the rule of Hun Sen, ex-Khmer Rouge cadre and former puppet ruler of Cambodia under the Vietnamese occupation.

His former Vietnamese employers were pleased. "This is a big victory for the Cambodian government and the people who want to have peace and stability in the country," burred 'Nhan Dan', the Vietnamese Communist Party newspaper. But

unhappy about the outcome.

Hun Sen was first put into power by Cambodia's Vietnamese occupiers in 1985. He lost the U.N.-supervised elections in 1993 because Cambodians hated his rule, but he forced his way into a coalition government anyway by threatening civil war. Then he staged a bloody coup against his coalition partners last year.

Last month's election was just a way to create a democratic facade that would justify ending the post-coup ban on foreign aid to Cambodia. The National Election Committee (NEC) was packed with Hun Sen's supporters, and over a hundred opposition leaders and workers were murdered in the past year. Even if the counting was fair, the fix was already in. So where were all the protests?

There were loud protests within Cambodia, but the rest of the world was strangely silent. The report of former U.S. congressman Stephen Solarz's observation mission was typical: "The balloting and counting procedures were generally well administered, and the atmosphere on the balloting and counting days was largely upbeat." It is true as far as it goes, but that's not very far.

Even with all the manipulation and intimidation by Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (former-

Party), more people voted for the two big opposition parties than for the CPP: 46 per cent to 41 per cent. But a new formula for awarding seats, recently adopted by the CPP-dominated NEC, will give Hun Sen 64 seats, and his opponents only 58.

Since the constitution requires the presence of two-thirds of the members for the National Assembly to pass any legislation, the opposition's threat to boycott its meetings if their protests go unheeded rhetorically has some weight. But CPP steering committee member Svay Sitha couldn't care less: "If they don't (participate), the current government will go on (without a parliament) until probably 2003." And the foreigners don't care either.

It's one of the most flagrant displays of double standards in years. The struggle for democracy in Burma gets huge media and diplomatic attention, while the killing of democracy in Cambodia elicits scarcely a word of complaint. There's little to choose between the regimes — the Burmese military have ruled Burma ever since 1962 and reduced their country's economy from the region's richest to its poorest; Hun Sen's party contains the less fanatical elements of the old Khmer Rouge, and is equally dedicated to retaining absolute power — so why are they treated differently?

These contrasting attitudes are largely self-fulfilling prophecies. A spokesman of the Burmese regime recently complained that "it is unrealistic for other nations to force (Burma) to be at par with them in giving their citizens political rights," but the pressure will increase until the Burmese people get those rights. Whereas Cambodians, as usual, have been

Features

Latest disc Early Bronz

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Latest discoveries, excavations reveal intriguing remains of Early Bronze Age cultures in the Southern Ghors — Part VI

Editor's note: This is the sixth in a series of articles on recent explorations and excavations along the south-east Dead Sea coastal plain. The first five articles appeared in May and June.

HAS A missing link in Early Bronze Age archaeology been found in southern Jordan? Perhaps, according to the latest work in one of the most fascinating and beautiful landscapes in Jordan and the entire Middle East, the Southern Ghors region along the south-east Dead Sea coast.

The Expedition to the South-East Dead Sea Plain has been exploring a series of archaeological sites throughout the region, dated to the late fourth through the third millennium (3500 to 2000 B.C.). It initially surveyed the project area in 1973, excavated the Early Bronze Age walled towns of Bab edh-Dhra' and Numera, and more recently explored the sites of Feifeh and Khneizirah, south of the Dead Sea.

The Expedition, co-directed by Tom Schaub of Indiana University of Pennsylvania and Walter Rast of Valparaiso University (USA), has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Geographic Society, numerous grants from the universities and colleges of staff members, and many generous individual donors.

Khneizirah area sites

The southernmost of the sites being investigated in the project, located nearly six kilometers south of the Feifeh junction, is known as Rujm Khneizirah, comprising both a walled town site and a nearby cemetery area.

The site was visited by western travellers in the 1930s, without identifying its use or period of occupation. The town site is about 200 metres east of the highway and Wadi Khneizirah, on a high, flat spur at the mouth of Wadi Khneizirah.

Only a high pile of tumbled stones on the summit of the hill is visible from the highway. The ruins are surrounded by the remains of a stone wall following the contours of the hill. A heap of stones on the south-east side of the site may be the remains of an internal tower within the walls. Project members who have examined the site believe it is probably an Iron Age town like that identified at Feifeh, rather than an Early Bronze Age town — but only future excavations will provide the facts.

The town cemetery

South and west of the ruins are remains of plundered oval-shaped, stone-lined cist tombs cut into the ground. At a lower level north-west of the ruins are some ancient wall remains associated with a scattering of Nabataean sherds. Pottery collected by Rast and Schaub in 1973 and Burton MacDonald in 1985/86 dated from the Early Bronze, Iron, Nabataean, Roman and Mamluke periods, with a predominance of Iron II pottery, and EB IV pottery associated with the cist tombs.

Across Wadi Khneizirah to the south-west are several more tombs sites with EB IV pottery. Tom Raikes, who surveyed the area in the 1970s, noted worked flint, much pottery, glass fragments, graves and the remains of structures in the flood plain north of Wadi



Parts of the surviving ancient water systems at Wadi Khneizirah (photos by Rami G. Khouri)

Khneizirah; he thought that the ancient inhabitants of the area may have cultivated these fields as early as the Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age.

The name Wadi Khneizirah means "riverbed of the wild boar" in Arabic, and wild boar are still hunted today in parts of the Jordan River Valley, the Southern Ghors and Wadi Araba. Nearly two kilometres upstream from the highway, east of the dirt track leading into the wadi, is an ancient aqueduct with a standing archway on the north bank of the wadi, partly built of masonry and partly cut out of the natural rock. Its precise date of construction is unknown. Farther upstream, where the aqueduct bends through a deep-cut trench in

the rocks, are the remains of an ancient dam or water intake structure.

Khirbet Khanazir

In 1986 Burton MacDonald's survey team discovered the exciting new site called Khirbet Khanazir, located some two kilometres in from the highway and two kilometres south-east of Rujm Khneizirah. It comprises at least 85 rectangular or square structures that look like houses at first sight. The structures are scattered throughout an area of some two square kilometres in a remote, hard to reach area at the base of the highest mountain south-east of Rujm Khneizirah. (You can park your car at the end of

the dirt track leading east from the highway, next to a cement block some 200 metres before a modern water intake structure, then walk up about 20 minutes to reach the site.)

Five of the structures were cleared and excavated in 1990 by a team headed by MacDonald and Nancy Lapp, under the supervision of Rast and Schaub. They yielded no occupational remains, but instead turned out to be elaborate built tombs from the Early Bronze Age IV period (c. 2300-2000 B.C.). Large slabs that seemed to be part of a floor turned out to be ceiling stones for the stone-lined tomb chambers. The structures vary in size from 7-14 x 2-3 metres, and most are well preserved, some

with one-metre-high standing walls of two-to-five courses of unhewn stone. Each tomb had a stone-lined shaft leading down into a single burial chamber. There are no known parallels anywhere in the region. Rast and Schaub said in a recent interview in Amman.

Some of the tombs appear to have been re-used during the EB IV period, as evidenced by fully articulated burials placed over earlier groups of skeletons that were partially or totally disarticulated. The cemetery area appears to have been used for a relatively short period of time, perhaps two or three generations only.

The most intriguing finds from the excavations were a scarab with hieroglyphic

signs and a button seal with a carving of Anubis on the flat side. These both were found in association with a disarticulated burial in the upper levels of one tomb, and clearly reflect secondary use.

A most enigmatic age

The EB IV is one of the most enigmatic ancient periods, because most of the towns in this region appear to have been abandoned then; except for those who lived in a handful of known towns, most people in Jordan and Palestine appear to have reverted to a nomadic lifestyle during the EB IV period, probably due to a combination of economic, political or environmental reasons.

Only EB IV pottery was found at Khirbet Khanazir, and some of it has been linked with similar pottery from Bab edh-Dhra', at the northern end of the project area, but Khanazir's pottery extends to a slightly later period within the EB IV than Bab edh-Dhra's. Stone-lined EB IV tombs were also found at Bab edh-Dhra', but without the distinctive rectangular structures marking the tomb locations. The people at the two sites clearly shared a common culture.

Significant location

The significance of Khirbet Khanazir derives from its location so far south: it represents one of the southernmost settlements or cemeteries of EB IV people yet discovered in Jordan. Its location between known EB IV settlements in the Southern Ghors and the Naqab

(Negev) highlands of southern Palestine may prove it to be something of an archaeological "missing link". It may complete the pattern of EB IV settlements and cemeteries that spread south from the Jordanian highlands to the Southern Ghors and to southern and central Palestine, where there are some EB IV settlements (as opposed to north Palestine where there are only EB IV shaft tombs but no permanent settlements). Some of the cultural remains at Khirbet Khanazir are similar to items excavated by Bill Dever at a site in the Naqab called Bir Resisim, suggesting that the people who built these tombs may have moved in a wider regional context.

It remains to be determined what the EB IV people were doing in the Khanazir area — whether farming, livestocking, trading or some combination of these — and what kinds of links they had with other EB IV people in the region. There is no evidence yet of a permanent settlement immediately near the Khirbet Khanazir cemetery.

Farther south, between Wadi Khneizirah and Wadi en-Nukhbar, MacDonald identified another important EB IV site composed of at least eight "platforms". Some measure 21 x 5 metres and stand 1-2 metres high, and are assumed to be tombs like those excavated at Khanazir, though excavation might prove them to be some other kind of facility.



By Rami G. Khouri

Water Minister Haddadin resigns

(Continued from page 1)

short- and long-term alternative sources of water supplies and demanded that the government "rehabilitate" water personnel and laboratories.

The committee also recommended that Parliament should ask the government to review its water strategy and agree on a common policy that would not be affected by changes in government.

Opposition parties and several organisations are studying the possibility of suing the government over the water problem, and columnists in local dailies have been urging citizens to

initiate legal action and to investigate possible official negligence.

However, most lawyers say constitutional constraints have made it impossible to take any serving or former minister or the prime minister to court.

Several politicians also signed petitions asking the government to exempt citizens from paying their water bills for June and July because the water was polluted.

Sunday, in a symbolic move, 21 deputies signed a petition asking for Haddadin's resignation for his handling of the month-old water contamination crisis. But only 17 so far have

signed the petition calling for the government to resign. Although they cannot hold a no-confidence session, several deputies have recalled the resignation of the government of Taher Masri in 1991 after over 50 deputies signed a petition calling for its dismissal while Parliament was in recess.

Opposition Deputy Nazih Ammarin (Karak) said the 17-month-old government should be held responsible for the 28-day water crisis, which has sparked a nationwide scare.

"We don't want to make Haddadin the scapegoat," he told the Jordan Times. "The responsibility of the [water

crisis] falls on the entire government, and not on a single Cabinet member."

The NCP on Sunday joined the chorus seeking the dismissal of those responsible for the crisis.

"The party holds the executive authority [in the persons of] the ministers of health and water and irrigation and all officials and employees involved responsible [for the five-week water scandal]," an NCP statement said.

"The NCP demands that those who are found responsible [for the water problem] in both ministries be immediately dismissed, questioned and punished."

Anani holds talks with Khatami, Iranian officials

(Continued from page 1)

At the meeting, President Khatami was reported to have described Israel as a "plague" and "the greatest enemy of Islam and humanity."

Iranian state radio quoted the president as saying during the meeting that in order to resist this plague there is no solution except for unity among Muslim countries.

The Iranian president also said Tehran is "worried about the Zionist regime's bases in the region."

"Our interests require a serious struggle against the hegemony of the Zionist regime," he added.

Anani on Sunday also met with Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri, the speaker of the Iranian Shura council, with whom he reviewed Jordanian-Iranian ties and discussed Iran's role in the Islamic World as well as the upcoming visit of the Jordanian parliamentary delegation to Iran which will take place next week.

In addition, Anani also met with the Iranian minister of Industry, Gholam Rida

Shafei and reviewed Jordanian-Iranian economic ties.

Anani described a protocol signed by Iran and Jordan last January as a major achievement as it opened the way for businessmen in the two countries to embark on economic ventures.

The Iranian minister voiced his country's support for possible joint ventures saying that the two countries should remove all barriers in the path of bilateral trade.

Anani on Saturday met his Iranian counterpart Kamal Kharazi and reviewed politi-

cal, economic and cultural cooperation.

At the political level the two ministers discussed efforts for achieving a comprehensive Middle East peace and the restoration of the Palestinians' rights in their homeland as well as the question of Jerusalem.

The two sides emphasised the need for implementing the resolutions of the Jerusalem Committee which held its meetings in Morocco aimed at safeguarding the Arab and Islamic identity of the Holy City.

Iraq's parliament denounces U.S. Congress for 'lies'

(Continued from page 1)

Sullivan said. "In light of the present situation and pending further instructions, inspections are being conducted of the sites in Iraq which are subject to monitoring," she added.

Sullivan identified the sites where UNSCOM monitoring would continue as "sites which are either declared by Iraq or designated by the Social

Iraq's ruling Baath Party newspaper Al Thawra said that the row with the U.N. experts could only be resolved by easing the sweeping sanctions, saying Baghdad would not accept "a piece of sweet given to an angry child."

Al Thawra also said that UNSCOM was guided by a hostile American policy against Iraq.

"[UNSCOM] is only an American commission under

excesses in order to prevent lifting the embargo," it said.

Several hundreds of Sudanese students demonstrated on Saturday outside the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Baghdad, protesting against UNSCOM and the sanctions.


They burned U.S., British and Israeli flags and chanted anti-American slogans.

Two British nationals, meanwhile, started a fast and visit

quarters to protest against the continuation of the sanctions.


The two, Andrea Needham and Milan Rai, said they belonged to Voices in the Wilderness group which is campaigning for ending sanctions on Iraq.

They said the group was simultaneously holding similar sit-ins in front of the U.N. headquarters in New York and outside the premises of the British government in 10




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Businessmen likely to resent any move for arranging trade routes to Haifa, Aqaba

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A visit by Industry and Trade Minister Hani Mulki to Israel on Wednesday to discuss with his Israeli counterpart Natan Sharansky possible arrangements for importing goods through the ports of Haifa and Aqaba is expected to cause an uproar among the business community in the Kingdom.

Mulki indicated that importing goods through Haifa port was aimed at reducing the cost of goods transported from Europe and Northern America.

"Imports through Haifa come in line with the outcomes of the economic committees of the two countries held in the past," Mulki said in a press statement Sunday.

He added that Jordanian imports through Haifa is

"linked" to Israel's use of Aqaba port to import goods from East Asian countries, "which will enhance the activities of the Aqaba port."

Mulki warned that Jordan will impose "fines" on Jordanian traders wishing to import through Haifa port if Israel refuses to use the Aqaba port for its imports from East Asia.

Official figures show that Jordanian imports through the Mediterranean port of Haifa since 1994 amounted to 15,000 tonnes, compared to 30,000 tonnes a month through Aqaba port, the minister said.

But the minister's statement was not assuring to the business sector in the country.

"Figures show that importing goods from East Asia through Haifa port is less expensive than importing goods through Aqaba

port," said Mohammad Kjaldeh, chairman of the Shippers Association. "I don't think that Israelis will resort to import goods from East Asian countries through Aqaba while it is costing them less through Haifa port," Kjaldeh told the Jordan Times.

"Haifa port is very close to populated centres in Israel and that makes it easier to transport the goods to their final destination rather than transporting them from Aqaba or Eilat in the far south," he said.

"We will not stand armed," Kjaldeh said. "We have our options to defend our rights." He did not elaborate on the measures.

The shipper agent said the Kingdom should refrain from importing goods through Haifa port, especially food items, "because this will put our

strategic food security in the hands of the Israelis, endanger our maritime fleet and activities in Aqaba port."

Chairman of the Forwarders Association and Owners Syndicate (FAOS), Salim Jadoun, said importing from Haifa port was "not acceptable to them."

"What Dr. Mulki is trying to do is offer a media cover to imports from Haifa by convincing us that the Israelis will use Aqaba port in return," Jadoun said.

"I don't think the Israelis will resort to such a move. We do not trust them," the FAOS spokesman told the Jordan Times.

Jadoun blamed the minister for not consulting the private sector on this issue and warned that such a move would harm the activities in the Aqaba port. "Dr. Mulki's statement is not realistic and unaccept-

able and we don't think it could be turned into reality by the Israelis," he added.

Meanwhile, the industry and trade minister will discuss with Sharansky ways to enhance the flow of goods from Jordan to Israel and to the Palestinian market as well.

Mulki said Jordan and Israel will reevaluate the trade between the two sides in order to amend the old trade agreement between Amman and Tel Aviv and expanding the lists of goods.

The minister noted that he will discuss also with the Israeli side holding a four-party meeting, which will include also the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and the U.S., to discuss ways to remove the barriers that hinder the flow of Jordanian goods to the Palestinian and Israeli market and vice versa.

Ministry studying bids to import bottled mineral water from Syria, Saudi Arabia

By Ahmed Naser
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — As the water crisis enters its fifth week and demand for water grows, the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply will start importing bottled water before the end of the week, despite concerns from the country's five water bottling firms.

Industry, Trade and Supply Minister Hani Mulki said the ministry has approved the import of mineral water and containers from neighbouring Arab countries and is now studying bids from several bottling firms in Saudi Arabia and Syria.

Asked if the ministry was also considering supplies from Israel, Mulki told the Jordan Times, "imported water would only come

from neighbouring Arab countries."

On Saturday, ministry officials met with water bottling companies for consultations regarding purchase prices and container costs, according to private sector businessmen.

Though declining to divulge ministry price caps, Mulki said the imported water would be offered at competitive prices, while keeping in mind market demand for water.

But fears have been expressed that the emergency decision to allow the import of water may harm the country's industry.

"The peak season is almost at an end... A JD15 million industry is about to be destroyed for three weeks' worth of demand," said Ramzi Haditha, general manager of Ghadeer

Water Bottling.

"Officials or investors should not base their decisions on the circumstances of emergency situations," he added.

Haditha noted that there are five water bottling factories with a sixth on the way. He said under normal circumstances one factory can satisfy Jordan's bottled water needs.

He added that local firms always over-produce and have to export to other Arab markets.

Thabit Wir, owner of Al Sabeel Water Bottling Company, agreed with Haditha's opinion. Wir said that the current five bottling factories can handle up to three times the market's needs.

The decision to import water also comes at a time when Jordan is awaiting entrance into the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Both Haditha and Wir stressed that the water bottling industry should be considered a national

wealth and that it be exempted from WTO requirements for trade liberalisation.

But Haditha added that if the current reason behind importing water is to solve the present crisis, then companies that already have investments in this market should be given priority to import.

"This process will decide the future of the whole industry," he emphasised.

If the market is liberalised and supply increased, local investors warn that the market may be thrown into a depression after the end of the crisis or peak season — whichever comes first — and destroy the livelihood of around 1,500 families whose income is dependent upon the five factories.

Meanwhile, local water bottling firms reported that despite the 40 per cent increase in sales over seasonal averages, profits have not increased due to higher bottling costs.

Haditha said his company

has not raised prices for the last three years in spite of cost increases, such as the price of plastic used to make containers.

Haditha added that even though the bottling process was fast, the local manufacture of containers was still too slow, forcing his firm to import containers from Saudi Arabia at double the usual cost to meet the current 200 per cent increase in demand. Still, he said, prices will not be increased to preserve "consumer trust."

The water bottling industry in Jordan is worth JD15 million and normally produces around 250,000 litres a day, while only 150,000 plastic containers are manufactured daily.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

| Major Currencies & Cross Rates | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| Currency | USD | DEM | GBP | CHF | JPY | CAD | ITL | NLG | FRF |
| US Dollar | 1.7801 | 0.8138 | 1.4988 | 148.18 | 1.5210 | 1.7859 | 2.0075 | 5.9887 | |
| OE Mark | 0.6818 | - | 0.3446 | 0.8406 | 82.10 | 0.8642 | 0.8816 | 1.1277 | 3.3526 |
| GB Sterling | 1.8298 | 2.9018 | - | 2.4390 | 238.25 | 2.4789 | 281.85 | 3.2718 | 9.7278 |
| CH Franc | 0.6882 | 118.91 | 0.4097 | - | 97.65 | 1.0159 | 1178.71 | 134.10 | 3.9871 |
| JP Yen | 0.0068 | 1.2174 | 0.4195 | 1.0238 | - | 1.0402 | 12.01 | 137.29 | 4.0820 |
| CA Dollar | 0.6875 | 1.1688 | 0.4034 | 0.8837 | 1.04 | - | 1183.95 | 1.3190 | 3.9228 |
| IT Lira | 0.0006 | 1.0134 | 0.3482 | 0.8852 | 1202.79 | 0.8689 | - | 11.43 | 3.3878 |
| NL Guilder | 0.4981 | 88.85 | 0.3055 | 74.53 | 72.77 | 0.7575 | 874.48 | - | 2.9725 |
| FR Franc | 0.1675 | 0.2882 | 0.1027 | 28.0653 | 24.47 | 0.2548 | 33.63 | 33.6300 | - |

| Middle Eastern Currencies | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|----------|---------|--------|
| Currency | USD | JOD | SAR | BAH | QAT | KUW | AED | LBP | EGP |
| US Dollar | 0.7090 | 3.7606 | 0.3770 | 3.8400 | 0.3070 | 3.6727 | 1.509.50 | 3.4010 | |
| Jordan Dinar | 1.4104 | - | 5.2900 | 0.5317 | 6.1340 | 0.4330 | 5.1801 | 2129.06 | 4.7969 |
| Saudi Riyal | 0.2686 | 0.1890 | - | 0.1005 | 0.97 | 0.0819 | 0.98 | 402.47 | 0.9068 |
| Bahrain Dinar | 2.65 | 1.8808 | 9.8493 | - | 9.66 | 0.8145 | 9.74 | 4004.30 | 9.0219 |
| Qatar Dinar | 0.2747 | 0.1948 | 1.0304 | 1.0304 | - | 0.0843 | 1.01 | 414.70 | 0.9343 |
| Kuwait Dinar | 3.2870 | 2.3082 | 12.2157 | 1.2278 | 11.88 | - | 11.96 | 4916.46 | 0.9343 |
| Emirates Dinar | 0.2723 | 0.1930 | 1.0212 | 0.1028 | 0.9911 | 0.0836 | - | 411.01 | 0.9260 |
| Lebanese/1000 | 0.68 | 0.4697 | 2.4847 | 0.2487 | 2.4114 | 0.2034 | 2.4331 | - | 2.2531 |
| Egyptian | 0.2540 | 0.2085 | 1.1028 | 0.1108 | 1.0703 | 0.0903 | 1.0799 | 443.84 | - |

| Energy | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--------|--------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Oil | Last | Review | | | | | | | |
| Brent | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | | | | |
| W. Texas | 13.81 | 13.83 | | | | | | | |
| Bonny | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | | | | |
| Dubai | 12.37 | 12.34 | | | | | | | |
| UL Gas | 136.00 | 135.00 | | | | | | | |

| Mid-East Currencies | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--|--|--|--|
| Currency | USD | DEM | GBP | CHF | JPY | | | | |
| SA Riyal | 0.2686 | 0.4747 | 0.16359 | 0.39914 | 38.9664 | | | | |
| AE Dirham | 0.2723 | 0.48482 | 0.16706 | 0.4076 | 39.8121 | | | | |
| KW Dinar | 3.2870 | 5.80046 | 1.9884 | 4.87567 | 476.19 | | | | |
| BH Dinar | 0.3770 | 4.72367 | 1.6278 | 3.97141 | 387.88 | | | | |
| CY Pound | 1.9045 | 3.3902 | 1.1682 | 2.8501 | 278.4 | | | | |

| Metal Prices | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------|-------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Metal | Bid | Offer | | | | | | | |
| Gold (oz's) | 286.4 | 286.8 | | | | | | | |
| Silver (oz's) | 5.27 | 5.3 | | | | | | | |
| Platinum (oz's) | 379.3 | 381.3 | | | | | | | |
| AL (3 Months) | 1343 | 1345 | | | | | | | |
| CU (3 Months) | 1680 | 1685 | | | | | | | |
| Zinc (3 Months) | 1071 | 1075 | | | | | | | |
| Lead (3 Months) | 580 | 584 | | | | | | | |
| Ni (3 Months) | 4180 | 4180 | | | | | | | |

| Main Equity Indices | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------|----------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|--|--|
| Bourse | Index | Value | Chng | % Chng | High | Low | Pr Cls | | |
| New York | DOW JONES | 8988.02 | 20.34 | 0.24 | 8710.02 | 8952.96 | 8977.88 | | |
| New York | S&P 500 | 1089.45 | -0.18 | -0.02 | 1102.54 | 1084.72 | 1089.83 | | |
| London | FT-SE 100 | 5682.4 | 86.3 | 1.54 | 5682.4 | 5584.4 | 5584.1 | | |
| Tokyo | NIKKEI 225 | 16829.17 | -47.05 | -0.3 | 16837.3 | 16787.3 | 16787.2 | | |
| Paris | CAC 40 | 4041.88 | 73.28 | 1.85 | 4041.88 | 3968.57 | 3968.58 | | |
| Frankfurt | DAX | 5581.22 | 63.58 | 1.15 | 5580.08 | 5537.82 | 5517.64 | | |

| Energy | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Commodity | Last | Delivery | | | | | | | |
| Coffee (c/lbs) | 128.67 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Cocoa (\$/ton) | 1688 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Sugar (\$/ton) | 283.5 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Wheat (\$/ton) | 97 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Soya (c/lbs) | 23.4 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Tee (c/lbs) | 125 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Barley (\$/bsh) | 0 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Rice (\$/ton) | 415 | Spot | | | | | | | |

| JOD Cross Rates | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Currency | Buy | Sell | | | | | | | |
| US Dollar | 0.708 | 0.710 | | | | | | | |
| GB Sterling | 1.1564 | 1.1622 | | | | | | | |
| DE Mark | 0.3989 | 0.4009 | | | | | | | |
| CH Franc | 0.4745 | 0.4769 | | | | | | | |
| FR Franc | 0.119 | 0.1198 | | | | | | | |
| JP Yen | 0.4886 | 0.488 | | | | | | | |
| NL Guilder | 0.3538 | 0.3558 | | | | | | | |
| IT Lira | 0.4044 | 0.4064 | | | | | | | |

Finland economy risks overheating — OECD

PARIS (AFP) — The Finnish economy risks overheating, particularly after Finland joins the euro next year, and the government should move quickly to cut spending and carry out reforms, the OECD said.

"There are risks that the economy could overheat in the near future," the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) said in a country

report on Finland.

Finland's participation in the EU single currency from its launch in January 1999 will force it to pursue the same monetary policy as other euro members, but "monetary policy in the euro area may be too easy" for the current state of the Finnish economy, the OECD said.

Therefore, "timely structural reforms are called for to alleviate constraints on sus-

tained high growth" and "public expenditure should be cut further to allow a reduction of the very high tax burden."

Finland's unemployment rate remains high, forecast at 12.4 per cent this year and falling to 11.0 next year, but inflation-boasting wage rises are nonetheless likely in some sectors as employers are reporting shortages of construction workers, electronic

engineers and sales representatives, the report said.

"Despite the still high unemployment rate, the economy now risks overheating" with strong growth undermined by higher inflation, it warned.

The "deep-rooted structural problems" chiefly responsible "mainly concern insufficient mobility and other rigidities in the labour market," the report said.

engineers and sales representatives, the report said.

"Despite the still high unemployment rate, the economy now risks overheating" with strong growth undermined by higher inflation, it warned.

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Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Jordan wants Egypt to lower Suez Canal fees to boost the competitiveness of Aqaba port

TRANSPORT AND Telecommunications Minister Sami Gammoh emphasised in a press statement that preliminary studies confirm that the cost of importing grain through the port of Aqaba is lower by between \$2.5 and \$5 per tonne compared to neighbouring ports. The minister explained that the cost of importing to Amman through Aqaba is \$38 per tonne compared to \$40.5 through Haifa, \$41.9 through Beirut and \$42.6 per tonne through Latakia. He indicated that the total volume of grain imports (corn, fodder, flour, wheat, sesame and barley) during the first eight months of this year did not exceed the loads of about 500 trucks.

Gammoh stressed that the Ministry of Transport is following up continuously on the imports through Aqaba and other ports and is also conducting studies to ensure the competitiveness of the Jordanian port. He said that by upgrading the performance at the port and minimising costs, the ministry seeks to make Aqaba a competitive port to others in the neighbouring countries and to encourage businessmen to continue to import through this national port.

The minister indicated that there is a committee entrusted to follow up the charges and the handling costs of various goods at neighbouring ports in cooperation with the Aqaba port officials. He said that the committee presents periodic reports to the board of directors of the Ports Corporations to take suitable and quick measure to preserve the competitiveness of the Aqaba port.

"Our trade through the port of Aqaba is competitive to any trade through any other port in the region," Gammoh said, adding

"the Jordanian authorities are exerting all the efforts to maintain Aqaba the main outlet to all our external trade." He noted that a number of small traders imported few hundred tonnes of grains to the Kingdom through other ports but, the minister stressed, such a manner would not represent any burden on the Jordanian economy in general and especially on the port of Aqaba which he described as "still better by all standards and specifications."

Gammoh revealed that intensive efforts are under way to contact the Egyptian authorities to lower the Suez Canal crossing fees in order to make imports through Aqaba better, cheaper and easier. He emphasised that there are no worries over the competitiveness of Aqaba as large investments are being put into the port to make it the most attractive in terms of performance and service.

Meanwhile, the committee mentioned earlier has recommended studying the service charges for unloading grains at Aqaba as it is \$1.3 per tonne higher than the charges at Haifa port. The committee also recommended that trucks coming from Israel be checked for weight to conform with the axial load applicable in Jordan.

"If the two mentioned recommendations cannot be implemented to maintain the competitiveness of Aqaba, the matter should be reviewed again to restrict the import of foodstuffs to Aqaba with the exception of the imports of the Ministry of Supply of such products," the committee requested (Al Ra'i).

Dealing with Israel: Blessing or curse?

By Ghalia Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — For some industrialists, trade link with Israel — still a taboo — have helped revive their businesses, stagnant for years from political tension in the region.

A Jordanian manufacturer says she was able to transform an ageing vegetable oil warehouse that closed down several years ago because of a downfall in trade with Iraq, into a textile factory exporting to worldwide firms under a "made in Israel" label.

The industrialist, who requested anonymity, said ten months ago she began sub-contracting for Lodzia Rotex Apparel, one of Israel's major garment factories supplying clothes to leading multinationals such as Gap, Banana Republic and Van Housen.

"For many years we had to close down the warehouse that was built in 1957," she said. "Now, we have opened and we are employing 120 people."

On the surface, the operation appears to have allowed her to generate some badly-needed cash to meet urgent expenses and service bank loans.

But beyond that, the owner complains that business terms remain tough because Lodzia, for example, is paying her per minute of operation to produce a piece, not a fixed amount for overall monthly output.

Hilik Cohen, Lodzia's operation manager in Jordan, said the Israeli firm, with \$100 million in annual sales, was encouraged to start manufacturing in Jordan because of the Kingdom's cheap labour and infrastructure costs.

Inside the warehouse, workers, who earn between JD50 and JD150 a month, are toiled under blistering summer heat — most firms operating in Jordan do not have air-conditioning units.

Ninety per cent of Lodzia's overall production is re-exported to the United States under a free trade agreement clinched between Tel Aviv and Washington.

In addition to using the warehouse-turned-factory, Lodzia has sub-contracted three Jordanian firms to do similar works, raising the total number of workers involved to 250.

Israeli workers do the cutting in the Jewish state while Jordanians carry out the sewing and packaging to produce about 300,000 pieces of garment a month — 50 per cent of the company's overall production.

Israeli quality controllers train and supervise the Jordanian workers using sewing machines — half of which are provided by Lodzia.

Though the whole operation might seem convenient for Lodzia, this is not the

case for many Jordanian industrialists who say they are forced to work with what was once their enemy because they lack other alternatives.

The access of Jordanian goods to lucrative markets in Iraq and the oil-rich Gulf states as well as the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is not as easy as before because of internal and external developments in each of these markets.

"These people have agreed to be slaves for Israel at very minimal returns," Mahmoud Yassin, owner of the Zarqa-based Yassin Factory, told the Jordan Times.

Yassin, whose factory is Jordan's second largest manufacturer of men's suits, sports jackets and uniforms, exports to the U.S. using the general system for preferences.

Yassin said he was approached many times to sub-contract for Israeli firms but he refused. "I said no and I asked them never to come back again," he said.

He remains critical of deals such as Lodzia's operations in Jordan "because Israel is just taking advantage of Jordanians suffering from a recession economy."

Another textile manufacturer vowed he would not engage in business with

Israel if it perceives his company "as a cheap source of labour."

"If such cooperation was on equal basis, I don't have a problem with that," said the businessman who requested anonymity. "But if (my company) would be subservient to Israel's interest, I'm not interested," he said, echoing common held views.

A Qualifying Industrial Zone (QIZ) in Irbid housing 54 companies making anything from textiles to electronic components remains the main project at the heart of U.S.-Jordanian-Israeli efforts to deliver an elusive peace dividend to many of Jordan's disenchanted population.

Accelerated steps by Israel-based global multinationals to shift capital, production lines and plans to Irbid — three years after the 1994 peace treaty — is so far the most tangible by-product of a peace dividend that otherwise has failed to match the hopes of its proponents.

The hardline policies of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, elected in May 1996, have fuelled a ground swell of hostility by most of Jordan's business elite towards any dealings with Israel, even at the price of economic prosperity.

With all the benefits of operating in Jordan, Cohen, like most local and international businessmen, expressed frustration with Jordan's erratic economic policies and government red tape.

But one difficulty is confined to Israeli investors who, like Cohen, have to travel once every five days — a lengthy and costly process that involves replacing their Israeli licence plate with a Jordanian for JD32 each time they cross the Sheikh Hussein Bridge.

He is also annoyed by the flourishing bureaucracy. "The process of obtaining approvals from the industry and trade ministry and the customs department takes three days. The whole trip for products to go from Jordan to Israel via Jordanian trucks takes five days," Cohen said.

According to Shaul Sasson, head of the Israeli embassy's trade office, about 30 Jordanian textile companies are cooperating with 17 Israeli firms to re-export finished goods to U.S. markets.

"Labour intensive industries in Israel will eventually look to invest in Jordan...because under the U.S.-Israel free trade agreement Israel could carry out minor processing in other

countries such as sewing," said Sasson.

Many of these firms have laid off hundreds of thousands of workers due to a shift of production to Jordan since December.

Many Jordanian investors are angry with QIZ terms arguing that the privilege of having free access to the U.S. markets is coming at the expense of involving at least 11 per cent input from Israel.

They are engaged in negotiations with Israel to lower its input to eight per cent.

"I would use the QIZ, because I would rather buy from them (Israelis) than work for them," Yassin said.

Cohen says although the QIZ has failed to attract many local industrialists who are still opposed to normalising ties with the Jewish state, many local textile manufacturers are expressing interest to cooperate with Israeli firms.

"Many Jordanians who own factories that are out of operation, have been approaching us since we came to Jordan," he said. "There is a high demand, these people do not care about the political situation in the region."

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) This is a catch-up day. All sorts of stuff has to be handled. There may have been some breakdowns over the weekend. Don't plan on starting new projects until tomorrow. Today is excellent for completion — the more you complete, the more successful you'll be tomorrow and next week.

JANUARY (April 20 to May 20) The moon is going into Aries, the sign of the Lone Ranger, and if you have any of those tendencies, they're bound to come out. It's also a sign that holds itself, and everyone else, to high standards. If you run into somebody like that today, don't bother to tell them to lighten up.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 21) This could be your lucky break. If you already know what you want, go ahead and let people know what it is. If you don't know, do the homework quickly, because opportunities are abundant. You have to know which one to grab in order to get where you want to go.

CANCER (June 22 to July 21) If you get a crazy, romantic idea out of the blue, follow through on it. Your chances are apt to be accurate. You might even feel compelled to buy your loved one a special gift, something he or she wants very much, something you can't afford. This hardly ever happens, but today it'll be all right.

LEO (July 22 to August 21) Looks like money is coming into your account from an investment or from work already done. Don't keep this bounty to spend on toys, however. Buy tools instead. Use this gift to develop your natural talents. That's almost like buying toys, but with a useful purpose.

VIRGO (August 22 to September 22) People are looking to you to find the solution to a problem, and you might feel a little uncomfortable. You don't know how to fix this thing, but everybody seems to think you can. Well, maybe they see something you don't know about yourself. Maybe you're more capable than you realise!

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) This is a busy workday, but it looks like the abundance of work that's coming in is welcome. It means you'll have more opportunities to make the money you need to get the next thing on your list. The money won't be coming in today, however, but that'll give you more time to plan.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) An older person is leaning on you, and that's uncomfortable. The good news is you have a friend who understands. You two might not be able to get together during the day, but that's okay. An early dinner date will work fine. You'll have lots of tales to tell about how rough things have been lately.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) The wild blue yonder is calling, but before you go anywhere something needs to be done closer to home. Those vibrations are annoying, but they will be quite rewarding. The satisfaction you achieve by handling a domestic chore will make your vacation time more pleasurable.

APRICORN (December 22 to January 20) You may not know everything yet, but you're learning quickly. This gained today will make opportunities possible. You'll have to be strong and highly skilled to get what you want in a competitive arena. Don't worry about now. Just keep practising and improving.

PISCES (January 21 to February 19) You could make money today without much effort. You might get by asking for it. You are incredibly lucky as far as money is concerned, and you're feeling practical, too. Use of resources will make it possible for you to have a bigger goal later. Like security in your old age.

CEPS (February 20 to March 20) Today you feel a certain control. One thing you might do with this advantage is ask for help. Somebody out there would love to assist you in your present dilemma. You have skills you admire, but can't always use. He or she can use something you can provide. Work out a trade.

Horoscope of August: Peridot — Golden Quartz

Syria cuts custom tariffs with Arab nations

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria will reduce customs tariffs by 10 per cent on products imported directly from Arab nations beginning September first, the Syrian news agency SANA reported Sunday.

The measure, which does not include agricultural products or imports from free-trade zones, is part of an Arab League plan to eliminate all customs tariffs in the Arab World by 2008.

On Sunday the agency also reported an agreement between Syria and Lebanon to cut customs tariffs on industrial products by 25 per cent beginning next year.

The agreement, signed in February by Syrian Prime Minister Mahmoud Al Zohbi and his Lebanese counterpart Rafik Hariri, was ratified by decree of Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, the agency said.

Hariri said the accord was "historic" and would help develop relations between the two nations, which since 1991 have been linked by a "treaty of brotherhood, cooperation and coordination."

| JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|------------------------|-------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--|
| HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHORTLIST | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 09/08/1998 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PART 12 | MONTHS | COMPANY'S NAME | P / E | DIV. | NO. OF | VALUE | OPEN | CLOSE | CHANGE | | |
| HIGH | LOW | | | | SHARES | TRADED | PRICE | PRICE | | | |
| 385.500 | 170.000 | ARAB BANK | 18.1 | .90 | 28 | 1970 | 433750 | 219.00 | 221.50 | 2.50+ | |
| 2.100 | 1.620 | JOR. NATIONAL BANK | 13.4 | 4.24 | 12 | 20788 | 34299 | 1.65 | 1.65 | - | |
| 2.220 | 1.120 | BANK OF JORDAN | 8 | 0.00 | 3 | 650 | 753 | 1.14 | 1.16 | .02+ | |
| 1.300 | .870 | MID. EAST. INV. BK. | 63.1 | 0.00 | 6 | 1750 | 1700 | 1.01 | .96 | -.05- | |
| 2.680 | 1.550 | INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK. | 10.9 | 6.65 | 5 | 850 | 1326 | 1.56 | 1.56 | - | |
| 6.510 | 2.610 | THE HOUSING BK. | 19.3 | 3.28 | 22 | 8741 | 26882 | 3.08 | 3.05 | -.03- | |
| 1.500 | .930 | RAJEL. PORTFOLIO | 36.7 | 0.00 | 5 | 2000 | 1835 | .94 | .92 | -.02- | |
| 4.000 | 1.690 | JOR. ISLAMIC BANK | 17.6 | 0.00 | 3 | 350 | 602 | 1.71 | 1.72 | .01+ | |
| 3.900 | 1.350 | JOR. INV. FUND | 23.5 | 3.27 | 3 | 166 | 283 | 1.85 | 1.53 | -.02- | |
| BANK SECTOR TOTALS | | INDEX: 292.41 | CHNG: +0.74 | | 86 | 44384 | 504967 | | | | |
| 2.850 | 1.640 | JOR. FRENCH INSUR. | 7.5 | 9.36 | 10 | 6150 | 16517 | 2.71 | 2.67 | -.04- | |
| 2.210 | 1.090 | BOKY LAND INSUR. | 8.2 | 0.00 | 1 | 200 | 220 | 1.16 | 1.10 | -.06- | |
| INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS | | INDEX: 129.01 | CHNG: -0.42 | | 11 | 6350 | 16737 | | | | |
| 2.240 | 1.470 | JOR. ELECTRIC PRV. | 9.9 | 5.39 | 5 | 3140 | 4803 | 1.53 | 1.53 | - | |
| 4.030 | 1.410 | JORD. ELECTRICITY | 15.5 | 3.98 | 1 | 100 | 251 | 2.60 | 2.51 | -.09- | |
| 7.850 | 2.260 | VECLIS. OVERSEAS FID. | 8.8 | 5.58 | 2 | 1590 | 3419 | 2.26 | 2.15 | -.11- | |
| 1.500 | .930 | RAJEL. PORTFOLIO | 36.7 | 0.00 | 5 | 2000 | 1835 | .94 | .92 | -.02- | |
| 9.500 | 5.100 | ALBAH'T | 8.8 | 6.96 | 1 | 200 | 1150 | -5.75 | 5.75 | - | |
| 1.480 | 1.060 | MID. EAST HOTELS | 9 | 0.00 | 4 | 5160 | 5676 | 1.10 | 1.10 | - | |
| 4.800 | 1.880 | ARAB TRVL. INV. EDGC. | 9.7 | 2.04 | 14 | 14850 | 29277 | 1.97 | 1.96 | -.01- | |
| 1.530 | 1.230 | UNITED CO | 8.67 | 2.00 | 2 | 11400 | 14208 | 1.24 | 1.24 | - | |
| 1.350 | .950 | UNITED FOR FINAN. INV. | 1.4 | 5.95 | 1 | 5000 | 5400 | 1.10 | 1.08 | -.02- | |
| SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS | | INDEX: 110.93 | CHNG: -0.16 | | 57 | 43440 | 66018 | | | | |
| 4.000 | 1.840 | JOR. CEMENT FACT. | 11.3 | 5.76 | 22 | 11338 | 21646 | 1.93 | 1.91 | -.02- | |
| 6.800 | 4.800 | ARAB POTASH CO. | 23.4 | 4.21 | 6 | 25000 | 118750 | 4.90 | 4.75 | -.15- | |
| 12.250 | 9.870 | JOR. PETROL. REFINERY | 10.4 | 0.00 | 21 | 3343 | 35516 | 10.55 | 10.70 | .15+ | |
| 5.500 | 4.450 | JORDAN TANNING | 7.4 | 8.70 | 1 | 1000 | 4600 | 4.60 | 4.60 | - | |
| 1.820 | 1.060 | INDUSTRIAL COM. PRV. | 62.6 | 0.00 | 3 | 3974 | 4299 | 1.11 | 1.06 | -.05- | |
| 7.350 | 5.900 | JOR. WOODSTOCK | 8.1 | 3.25 | 3 | 216 | 1296 | 6.00 | 6.15 | .15+ | |
| 5.740 | 4.400 | ARAB PETROL. SHIP. | 7.3 | 2.65 | 57 | 22774 | 60634 | 2.49 | 2.63 | .06+ | |
| 5.500 | 1.270 | JOR. CEMENT IND. | 5.4 | 8.00 | 9 | 4050 | 5110 | 1.27 | 1.25 | -.02- | |
| 8.540 | 5.870 | ARAB CHEM. INDUSTR. | 7.9 | 7.04 | 1 | 200 | 1420 | 7.10 | 7.10 | - | |
| 6.350 | 4.700 | DAR ALADWA. INV. FUND. | 8.5 | 6.46 | 2 | 174 | 942 | 5.42 | 5.42 | - | |
| 2.980 | 1.730 | ARAB ALUM. IND. | 13.2 | 14.04 | 2 | 3850 | 6795 | 1.76 | 1.78 | .02+ | |
| 1.570 | .400 | LIVESTOCK & POULTRY | 14.2 | 0.00 | 21 | 25950 | 10899 | .43 | .42 | -.01- | |
| .590 | .370 | EXTRNED. PETRO. CHEM. | 9 | 0.00 | 3 | 1150 | 437 | .39 | .38 | -.01- | |
| INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS | | INDEX: 86.50 | CHNG: -1.70 | | 288 | 25671 | 370077 | | | | |
| GRAND TOTAL | | INDEX: 179.66 | CHNG: +0.08 | | 442 | 350955 | 957799 | | | | |
| PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 09/08/1998 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.050 | .880 | EXPORT & FIN. BOK. 75% | 16.7 | 0.00 | 2 | 200 | 130 | .90 | .90 | - | |
| 1.500 | .340 | JOR. TRADE FID. | 9 | 0.00 | 1 | 500 | 215 | .44 | .43 | -.01- | |
| 1.340 | 1.020 | SANA FOR INVESTMENT | 65.4 | 0.00 | 1 | 10000 | 10000 | 1.03 | 1.00 | -.03- | |
| .800 | .510 | UNION INV. | 9 | 0.00 | 4 | 355 | 179 | .51 | .51 | - | |
| .820 | .280 | ARAB PET. INVEST. | 9 | 0.00 | 5 | 825 | 2402 | .29 | .28 | -.01- | |
| .780 | .630 | AL-DANGLYAN | 36.9 | 0.00 | 5 | 5371 | 3520 | .63 | .63 | - | |
| .270 | .100 | JOR. INDS. MATCH-JEMCO | 9 | 0.00 | 2 | 3000 | 330 | .11 | .11 | - | |
| .700 | .430 | HAZEL. POTZNER | 9 | 0.00 | 2 | 1017 | 518 | .52 | .51 | -.01- | |
| .840 | .340 | OPTICOLA HEADLINE CO. | 9 | 0.00 | 3 | 11780 | 3938 | .34 | .34 | - | |
| .760 | .580 | WAT. ALKALIZING | 32.2 | 0.00 | 11 | 5189 | 3372 | .66 | .65 | -.01- | |
| 1.310 | .810 | MUTRIDAR | 9 | 0.00 | 9 | 6078 | 5232 | .87 | .87 | - | |
| GRAND TOTAL | | | | | 85 | 106006 | 54159 | | | | |

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Russia beat USA to move into world basketball final

ATHENS (AFP) — Russia, led by a superb Sergei Babkov who scored 30 points, beat USA 66-64 here on Saturday to move into the final of the world basketball championships. It was a real disappointment for USA who led 64-54 with just three minutes to go before a great fight-back by Russia who won 12 points in a row and with the crucial basket coming from Sergei Panov.

And Russia meet Yugoslavia, who beat Greece 78-73 after overtime in Saturday evening's other semi-final. USA, led by Rudy Tomjanovich and without their NBA stars, just failed to get through but had battled well.

The Americans were better on the backboards as they won the rebound battle 38-28, but Russia's zone defence was effective at the end of the match, hampering USA's scoring attempts.

Babkov began well as he scored 13 of Russia's points as they led 17-10, though American guard Michael Hawkins was holding his own in his battle with opposite number Vassili Karashev. USA fought back with a basket by Jason Sasser in the final second of the first half to put them two points ahead at 39-37. Sasser was excellent in the second period as USA went on to lead by 64-54.

Then came two three pointers from Babkov and it was another basket from him that put the sides level at 64-64 with one minute 11 seconds to go.

A foul by Hawkins on Karashev 10 seconds from the end gave possession back to Russia and Panov did not squander his chance.



Russian players celebrate their team's victory over USA (64-62) after the first semifinal of the World Basketball Championship in Athens' Olympic Stadium August 8. Russia will face Yugoslavia or Greece in Sunday's final (Reuters photo)

Capobianco misses out on Games 100m spot

SYDNEY (AFP) — Dean Capobianco, back in action after serving a suspension for using steroids, is in danger of missing out on a place on Australia's Commonwealth Games track and field squad.

Capobianco missed out on a spot in the 100 metres final at the trials and if he does not improve in Monday's 200m final his only chance of going to Malaysia is as a member of the 4x400m relay squad.

Matt Shirvington confirmed himself as Australia's leading contender for the 100m gold at the Commonwealth Games by winning at the trials on Sunday.

The 19-year-old national 100m title holder powered to victory into a stiff headwind in 10.37secs to easily account for New Zealander Chris Donaldson (10.65) with Atlanta-based Damien Marsh third in 10.68.

Shirvington has been the country's dominant sprinter of the last 12 months and will be strongly favoured to clinch the sprint double in Monday's 200m event.

Lauren Hewitt will join the prequalified Melinda Gainsford-Taylor in the women's 100m in Kuala Lumpur after winning easily in 11.69s into a strong headwind.

The former world junior 200m silver medallist showed the benefit of five weeks' training in Finland with her new coach Esa Peltola.

Tania Van Heer was second in 11.84s and former Olympic hockey gold medallist Nova Peris-Kneebone was third in 11.95s.

Australian Lisa-Marie Vizaniari claimed the biggest scalp in women's discus by pipping world champion Beatrice Faumuina of New Zealand on her final throw.

By her own admission, the 1990 Commonwealth champion threw shockingly for much of the day, but a change of discus in the final round did the trick as she managed a best effort of 60.65m.

Faumuina was unbeaten from January 14, 1997, until June this year but has now lost her last five events. She made a valiant effort to snatch first place with her final throw, but came up 9cm short.

World silver medallist Joanna Stone won the women's javelin with the second biggest throw in the world this year of 68.23m ahead of Atlanta Olympic silver medallist Louise McPaul (64.55m). Both have prequalified for the Commonwealth Games.

Only Germany's Tanja Damaska (70.10m) has thrown further in 1998.

Pat Dwyer and Casey Vincent went 1-2 in the men's 400m with Dwyer winning in 45.90s from Vincent (46.15s).

Atkinson says drug use widespread in Premiership

LONDON (AFP) — Ron Atkinson, one of football's most experienced managers, Sunday claimed that drugs are being widely used by players in the English Premiership.

The former Manchester United, Aston Villa and Sheffield Wednesday manager alleged in a book extract published in the Mail on Sunday newspaper that drugs are being taken by at least a dozen players.

"All of us are aware of Paul Merson's drug addiction — which we are all delighted to see he has overcome — and the way it jeopardised his career. He is not, believe me, an isolated case, nowhere near it," Atkinson says in his book 'A Different Ball Game'.

"There are others in the Premiership battling the same kind of traumas. Merson might well have

indulged in drugs of a serious variety, but through the 90s other players with top clubs have certainly had experience of using illegal substances.

"In my later management years, I would bet that on any average Premiership weekend there were probably a dozen players — and here I am being deliberately cautious — playing with some sort of illegal substance in their bodies."

Atkinson claims that the biggest drugs dealer in the game is thought to be a well-known England international.

"He cornered the drug market and, apparently, whatever substance you wanted, he would very quickly have it available," he said. He did not name the former player.

Atkinson first learnt of drugs being used by footballers when he was

Aston Villa manager.

"I know from my time at Aston Villa that drugs are used by footballers at the highest level," he said. "I found out through a test I arranged with the club physiotherapist."

"When the analysis was completed, we discovered that at least two Villa stars of that era had taken an illegal substance."

"If the evidence had been laid in front of the FA, they would almost certainly have been banned for a lengthy period."

"Another of Villa's big-name players used to call me at home so laid-back I suspected he was horizontal."



Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands returns a shot to American Andre Agassi in their semi-final match at the du Maurier Open in Toronto. Krajicek won the match 4-6 7-5 6-2 and will face Australian Patrick Rafter in the final (Reuters photo)

Krajicek halts Agassi to set up clash with Rafter

TORONTO (AFP) — Sixth-seeded Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands stopped red-hot American Andre Agassi 4-6, 7-5, 6-2 on Saturday, setting up a showdown with Pat Rafter in the final of the Canadian Open tennis tournament.

Krajicek halted the eighth-seeded Agassi's 14-match winning streak and spoiled his chance for a third ATP Tour title in as many weeks. After pulling even following a lengthy second set, the 26-year-old Dutchman broke Agassi's serve in the fourth game of the final set and stormed to victory.

Third-seeded Rafter advanced to his first career Super 9 final by dispatching seventh seed Tim Henman of Britain 6-2, 6-4.

Rafter, the reigning U.S. Open champion, will attempt to win his third ATP Tour title of the year Sunday when he faces Krajicek, who also defeated American qualifier Alex O'Brien and fourth seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia on his way to the final.

Currently ranked fifth in the world, the 25-year-old Rafter has claimed tournament victories in Chennai, India, and s'Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands, this year after winning his first Grand Slam title last year in New York. If he claims his fifth career singles title on Sunday, he will move to No. 3 in the world.

Pete Sampras, looking to finish as the No. 1 player in the world for a record sixth straight year, is expected to be displaced by Chilean Marcelo Rios at the top spot for the second time this year.

Sampras was beaten by Agassi in three sets in Friday's quarter-finals.

Rios held a brief four-week reign as the top-ranked player in April after winning the Lipton Championships.

Smith to captain Great Britain

LONDON (AFP) — Steve Smith will captain the Great Britain men's team in the European Championships later this month — even though he won't be taking part himself.

The 25-year-old long jumper misses the Budapest event with a neck injury, but will captain the side after original skipper Roger Black, dropped from the 400m individual lineup, opted not to take part.

It is the first time the British team have appointed a non-competing captain for a major championship.

Smith will lead a 46-man team at Budapest between August 18 and 23 with the final selections made Sunday. An additional nine men were called-up together with four women, among them former Commonwealth 800m champion Diane Modahl.

Modahl, who cleared her name after a positive drugs test, achieved the qualifying standard in the 800m after running 1:59.77 in Monaco, where she recorded her best time since 1993.

Black's vacant 4x400m relay position goes to Jamie Baulch, a member of the World and Olympic silver medal winning team.

Title challengers Lens, PSG both lose opening games

PARIS (AFP) — Defending champions Lens and Paris Saint Germain both lost their opening matches of the French football championship this weekend but Monaco and Marseille, who complete France's big four title challengers, both managed victories.

Paris Saint Germain may have lost 3-1 to Bordeaux but at least their 100 million franc (about \$17 million) signing Jay-Jay Okocha of Nigeria scored a superb goal when they were trailing 2-0. Both teams played the second half with 10 men.

Lens, who won the league for the first time last season on a financial shoe-string, also lost away and conceded three goals, falling 3-2 at Toulouse.

But Monaco fought back from a goal down to defeat promoted Lorient on Friday evening and Marseille thanked scorers Fabrizio Ravanelli and Eric Roy for their 2-0 Stade Velodrome victory over Nantes.

Bordeaux really started their season on a high with goals from Lilian Laslandes, Sylvain Wilford then Ali Benarbia. PSG were lacklustre in the first half though their Italian Marco Simone was one of the few who played well.

The only real events in the first half were the sendings off of Bordeaux's Michel Pavon, for a tackle from behind on Yann Lachuer in the 33rd minute, and then

the dismissal PSG's Bruno Carotti who clashed with Benarbia just before the break.

Then came a shot from outside the area by Laslandes, set up by Yugoslavian Nisa Saveljic, for Bordeaux's 57th minute opener. A minute later, Laslandes set up Wilford for their second goal to effectively kill off the game.

Then came a moment of brilliance from Okocha who unleashed an incredible shot to pull a goal back for PSG though Benarbia hit Bordeaux's third with two minutes to go.

Marseille dominated their match against Nantes in front of more than 36,000 at the Stade Velodrome.

Ravanelli fired in two free kicks in the first half, world champion defender Laurent Blanc, who played about 20 minutes up front with Florian Maurice, had another dead ball kick. But it was not till four minutes after the break that Ravanelli fired home the opener from a cross by Robert Pires which Nantes keeper Mickael Landreau could not hold.

Roy made sure of victory in the final minute when he lobbed keeper Landreau after being put through by Christophe Dugary.

French title contenders Monaco fought back to beat little Lorient 2-1 with a late penalty from Ludovic Guilu on the opening day of the championship on Friday.

Promoted south Brittany club Lorient, who have a total budget of just 55 million francs (about \$10 million), held their heads up high although defeated by the Principality club boasting two world champions in their starting 11.

Ali Bouafra checked Monaco in the 23rd minute when he sidefooted the ball past world champion keeper Fabien Barthez, who played despite injury fears.

Franck Gava got in front of Lorient defender Nicolas Charec to lodge home Monaco's equalizer from near the penalty spot to save their embarrassment two minutes after the break.

Then Gava was brought down by Yannick Fischer in the area and Guilu joyfully celebrated after putting the spotkick wide of Hugues's flailing right hand in the 89th minute.

Lens were twice ahead at Toulouse, first through Tony Vairelles and then Stephane Dalmat, but goals from Robert Malm, Ahmed Maharni, and a final own goal by Lens player Xavier Meride earned Toulouse their home win.

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Additional shows Thursday and Friday evenings at 12:30

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Comedian Adel Imam .. in

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Lindsay Davenport of the U.S. delivers a backhand shot during her 6-4 2-6 7-5 semi-final round win over compatriot Monica Seles at the Corel WTA Toshiba Tennis Classic at the La Costa Resort and Spa in Carlsbad (Reuters photo)

Pierce rallies to upset Hingis

SAN DIEGO (AFP) — Mary Pierce upset defending champion Martina Hingis to earn a place in the final of the WTA Tour event here, saving three match points en route to a three-set win.

The unseeded French woman downed Hingis, the world No. 1 and top seed, 3-6, 7-6 (9/7), 6-2 to earn a shot at second-seeded American Lindsay Davenport.

Davenport set up a chance for her second title in two weeks when she outlasted fourth seed Monica Seles 6-4, 2-6, 7-5.

Although Pierce had points to win the first two games, she appeared to be down and out after dropping the first set, winning just two points in the first three games of the second and then falling behind 4-1. But she levelled at 4-4, recovered a break at 5-5, to stretch the set to a tiebreak, and then saved three match points to take the match into a decider.

In the third set, Hingis failed to make any impression against an increasingly confident opponent, hurrying many of the points and taking her total of double-faults to nine. It looked as if she had given up, and she had.

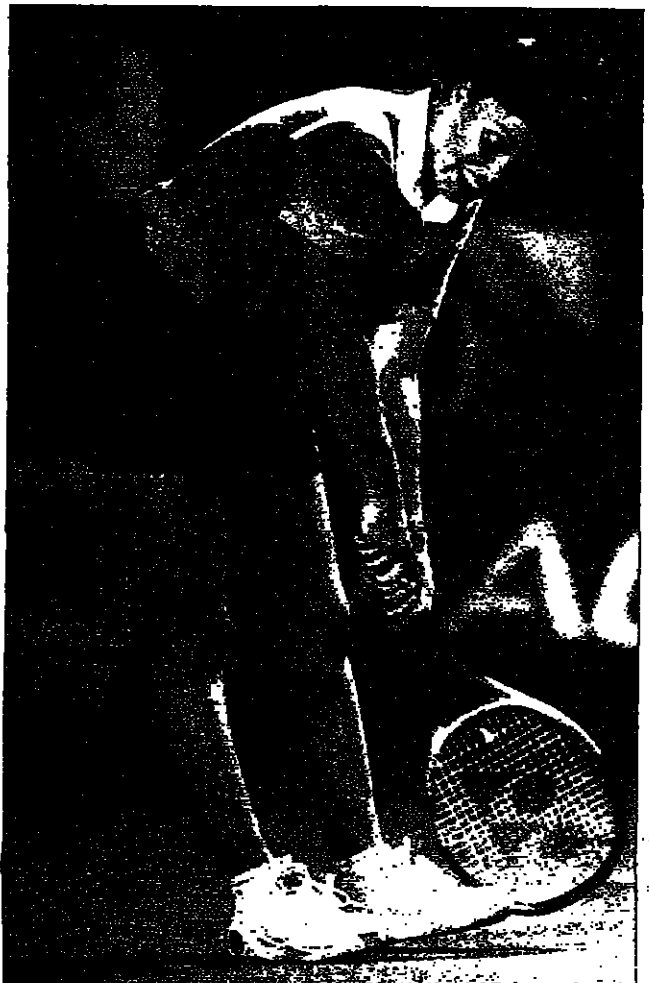
"I had so many chances, but at a set and 4-1 I just kind of played around and wasn't aggressive enough. I was too disappointed in the third set after having the match points, and I just gave up," Hingis confessed.

Hingis admitted that her mother and coach, Melanie, had accused her of playing like a junior, especially in her serving.

"My serve was sometimes there and sometimes not. I didn't really trust my serve," she said.

Pierce saved the three match points by coming to the net and volleying a winner, something that surprised Hingis.

"I was surprised how much she came to the net and it came out well for her," said Hingis. "She stayed in the match and fought back and she was mentally better than me, especially at the end."



Martina Hingis of Switzerland slams her racquet on the court in frustration during her match against Mary Pierce of France at the Corel WTA Toshiba Tennis Classic. Pierce won 3-6 7-6 (9-7) 6-2 (Reuters photo)

Pierce is a streaky and unpredictable player. She can make horrendous errors, but if her forehand is working then she often leaves her opponents helpless. That's how it was against Hingis, once she settled and put an end to her unforced errors.

"It was all mental," said Pierce. "I kept focused and fought for every point. I never gave up and took it point by point and tried to stay positive. It took me a while, but eventually I started to play a little bit smarter. It's too bad she should say she gave up, but I made her play. She had to beat me."

Davenport reached her second final in two weeks by striking her groundstrokes well and coming in quickly on the short ball. But after sneaking the first set

Arsenal win Charity Shield

WEMBLEY (AP) — League champion and FA Cup winner Arsenal totally outplayed its biggest rival, Manchester United, Sunday to score a 3-0 victory in the traditional season opener, the Charity Shield.

Marc Overmars, Christopher Wreh and Nicolas Anelka fired the three goals as the Gunners exposed weaknesses in the United defence at Wembley, which Arsenal plans to use as its home ground during this season's Champions Cup competition.

"We've still got the same mentality and that will be the basis for this year's challenge," said Arsenal striker Dennis Bergkamp, who missed the second half because of a recurrence of a hamstring problem. "This is a good start."

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger was encouraged by the result.

"This was an unexpected scoreline," the Frenchman said.

"It was important because you never know where you stand before the championship starts and it was important psychologically."

Thirteen of the 22 starters were in action during the World Cup, including Arsenal's Emmanuel Petit and Patrick Vieira, who were on the French lineup who won it.

United midfielder David Beckham, cast as a World Cup villain because his needless expulsion against Argentina led to England's elimination, was booed by the Arsenal fans every time he touched the ball. They also chanted "off, off, off" as a reminder of his expulsion at Saint-Etienne.

United's England defender Gary Neville was shown the yellow card in the third minute for hauling down Dutch World Cup star Roy Keane, returning to the United lineup after being sidelined for 11 months with a knee injury, was warned by the referee for some overly robust tackling.

Sunday's result in what effectively is a pre-season exhibition game will give Arsenal plenty of reasons to suggest that Wenger's team, which downed United twice in the Premier League last season, could dominate again.

But he admits his team still needs to buy again to provide cover for his strikers, having sold veteran Ian Wright to West Ham.

"I'm not going to name names, but we need a striker because we are short in numbers if something happens to Nicolas or Dennis," Wenger said.

"We also have so many games to play, but who we are going for I can't tell you because I don't know 100 percent myself at the moment."

"I'm a little bit concerned because in England there is no break in the winter and with our being involved in so many competitions, we will have to be very cautious," Wenger said.

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Arab Junior Swimming Championships open today

By Roufan Nabhas
Special to the Jordan Times

Here is a quick look at the best times for Jordanian and Arab competitors.

| Event | Jordanian Record | Arab Record |
|----------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| * Girls 14-15 | | |
| 100m breast | 1:28 | 1:20.51 Egypt |
| 100m butterfly | 1:18 | 1:10.67 Egypt |
| * Girls 16-17 | | |
| 50m freestyle | 30.11 | 29.94 Algeria |
| 100m butterfly | 1:11.02 | 1:11.85 Egypt |
| * Boys 12-13 | | |
| 100m freestyle | 1:08 | 1:00.71 Egypt |
| 100m backstroke | 1:17 | 1:07.02 Algeria |
| * Boys 14-15 | | |
| 100m backstroke | 1:14 | 1:02.26 Egypt |
| 100m butterfly | 1:14 | 58.93 Egypt |
| * Boys 16-17 | | |
| 200m freestyle | 2:06 | 1:56.64 Egypt |
| 100m butterfly | 1:05 | 58.67 Egypt |

AMMAN — The 5th Arab Junior Swimming Championships kick off at Al Hussein Youth City Monday with 12 countries taking part in swimming, water polo and diving competitions.

The August 10-16 event groups swimmers from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Algeria, Oman, Iraq, Syria, Qatar, Tunisia, Palestine, Morocco in addition to Jordan.

Held under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Rania, the event is the first of many in preparation for the upcoming Pan-Arab Games which will be held in Amman 1999.

"Our swimmers are ready although they are going to face some hard competition beating the Arab champions especially Egypt's swimmers," coach Ali Nawas told the Jordan Times.

"They are trying their best to improve their time but they have many obstacles hindering further achievements," he added.

"Having our own swimming pool can solve many problems," Nawas said. "We don't have to stick to a limited time for training."

Meanwhile, Jordan's swimmers are enthusiastic to prove themselves.

Jordanian champion, the 17-year-old Omar Dallal, who trains in Canada said that there is a big difference between training here and abroad.

"For example in Canada swimmers have a certain strict programme to follow. We train six days a week," Dallal explained in an interview with the Jordan Times.

"Coaches here need to go abroad and learn more special techniques of swimming," he pointed out.

Dallal's best time is 2:06 compared to Egypt's 1:56.64 in 200m freestyle. Coach Nawas expressed his dissatis-

faction of certain swimmers' attitude towards training.

"Lack of incentives can make athletes lazy and irresponsible. They are not committed enough."

Dallal who believes that he has a good chance said that he and his teammates are ready for the big event.

"Yes we are ready and we will do our best to take some advanced places," he said.

Fourteen-year-old Hiba Nasser, who suffered a shoulder injury but is now back, said that all preparations went well.

"I am happy with the preparations and with the training provided by our coach," she told the Jordan Times.

Nasser's best time in 100m freestyle is 1:09 seconds compared to Morocco's 1:03.24.

The youngest swimmer on the team, Farah Younes who is only 11 years old with a record of 37 seconds in 100m

backstroke, expressed her happiness at being in the competition.

"I am proud to be the youngest member of the team and I hope I will do well in the event," she added.

There is no doubt that all eyes will be watching Egypt's swimmers who hold the best Arab times in previous events.

Coach Nawas said that although Jordan is trying hard to improve its competitive level in swimming others are trying harder and faster.

"Yes we are moving but let's not forget that others are moving faster," he pointed out.

"So it is like a double burden on our team," he said. "First we have to reach the level of others and then try to surpass them."

"An uneasy job for a team most of whom who have the Tawjhi year ahead and will soon have less time for their favourite sport," he said.

Sampras needs to fight to regain top spot

CINCINNATI (AFP) — Pete Sampras faces a fight to regain the World No. 1 spot as he heads into next week's \$2.45 million ATP Championship tournament.

Sampras will need to bounce back quickly after losing on Friday in Canada to fast-rising rival Andre Agassi, who is heading back into the Top Ten after a 100-place fightback over the past nine months.

The defeat of Sampras in the Toronto quarter-finals will put Chile's Marcelo Rios on top of the world for Monday's start of the elite Mercedes Super 9 tournament.

The Chilean has not played since losing to Karol Kucera of Slovakia in the semi-finals at Stuttgart last month, a defeat which kept the South American

from seizing back the top spot which he held during April.

Rios withdrew from a clay tournament in Kitzbuhel, Austria, a fortnight ago, complaining of a pulled thigh muscle and a skin ailment, whereupon the 22-year-old travelled to New York for treatment.

Absent through injury is Briton Greg Rusedski, at sixth in the world the only member of the top ten to be missing from the tournament.

Rusedski is still not fit after falling on his ankle at Queen's club two months ago. The Canadian-born naturalised-Briton had a bad fortnight as he was forced to retire from his first round Wimbledon match with Australia's Mark Draper and lost his coach Tony Pickard, who was irritated that last year's U.S. Open runner-

up had gone against his advice by trying to play.

However, Briton will be represented by Wimbledon semi-finalist Tim Henman, seeded 11, who begins against Austria's evergreen former world number one Thomas Muster, who has been suffering from shoulder problems.

Of the world Top 20, only Rusedski, Kucera and Thomas Enqvist of Sweden — also injured — will not play.

Sampras, who had a blister removed from the bottom of a foot a few weeks after claiming a fifth Wimbledon title, will start his comeback with a first-round bye and could then come up against either Czech Martin Damm or Australian Woodforde.

Rios will face the winner of a match between Australian Jason Stoltenberg and Czech Daniel Vacek.

The tournament will also be the venue for a bold experiment in television coverage on the ATP Tour.

Among the innovations to be tried are a remote-controlled "Go" camera positioned behind the players on the baseline, a robot camera suspended on wires 12 metres above a showcase court and a camera and microphones near the umpire's chair.

A crew of 90 instead of the usual 30 will be producing the coverage, which the Tour hopes will be the wave of the future in televising the sport.

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Mary Pierce of France returns a serve during her semi-final round win over Martina Hingis of Switzerland. Pierce upset Hingis, 3-6 7-6 (9-7) 6-2 (Reuters photo)

After Israel fails to convince PNA of new ideas No further meetings scheduled; Netanyahu works on other ideas

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — No talks were scheduled Sunday between Israel and the Palestinians after the Jewish state failed to persuade the Palestinian National Authority it had new ideas to put forward on a long-overdue troop pullback from the West Bank, Israel radio reported.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was preparing new proposals on the amount of the territory to be included in the withdrawal, the radio said.

But Israeli negotiators were unable over the weekend to get their Palestinian counterparts to agree to a date for a new meeting.

The direct talks broke off last Monday when the Palestinians said Israel had failed to offer any genuine ideas to iron out agreement on a months-old U.S. plan which they have accepted but Israel has repeatedly rebuffed.

The U.S. plan calls on Israel to pull back from 13 per cent more of the West Bank alongside Palestinian measures designed to address its security concerns.

"Not presenting the initiative enables Netanyahu

to use the talks as a cover for his intention to evade the peace process and to give him more time and more excuses not to implement the [previous] agreements," Arafat wrote in a letter sent Friday to U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

The State Department said Thursday that it was close to making a pronouncement on the process.

"We're not abandoning this current phase of our effort but we're not far from declaring our judgement on it," said State

Department Deputy Spokesman James Foley.

The Palestinians last week rejected an Israeli proposal that three per cent of the land to be handed over to them be labelled a nature reserve where they would only exercise limited control.

The peace process has been deadlocked since May 1997 when Israel began construction on a new Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem, where the Palestinians hope to establish a future state.

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Israel calls on Russia to stop Iran missile help

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urged Russia's security chief on Sunday to help stop the transfer of arms technology to Iran.

"We are going to discuss ways that Israel and Russia can cooperate, do something about the problem of missiles in the Persian Gulf," Netanyahu said at the start of a meeting with Russia's Security Council Secretary Andrei Kokoshin.

"This is a very big problem we think for the stability of the region and for the security of all states including Israel and Russia and we intend to discuss this...in a productive way," he added.

Last month U.S. President Bill Clinton imposed sanctions on seven Russian enterprises that Washington believes helped Iran develop its missile programme.

The United States and Israel have pressured Moscow to withhold the sale of rockets, nuclear

technology and technical assistance to Tehran.

"No doubt that in the last months the Russians made a number of steps — legislative, administrative and practical," Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky told a news conference after meeting Kokoshin.

"Nevertheless we will be satisfied not by the steps which are taken but by the results in the field...[which] are alarming...We believe that in a year if the assistance from...the companies of Russia and all the other countries will not stop, Iran can have its own missile," Sharansky said.

Last month Iran test-fired a missile with a range of 1,300 km. The Shehab-3 could strike Israel, Saudi Arabia, and portions of Russia, as well as Turkey.

Asked about the contribution of Russian companies to the Shehab-3 missile, a senior Israeli official said: "They do not reject outright

that in the missile there is no [Russian] know-how or technology." The official said Netanyahu's meeting with Kokoshin was scheduled in advance of Clinton's trip to Moscow next month.

Clinton is expected to discuss the issue of Russian assistance to Iran's missile programme with President Boris Yeltsin.

Kokoshin said Russia was doing everything in its power to limit arms deals between Russian companies and Iran.

"Russian policy concerning Iran and other countries is to prevent the proliferation of these dangerous technologies," he told reporters in occupied Jerusalem.

Kokoshin dismissed accusations that Russia was not taking the necessary steps to stop the arms trade, saying that nuclear proliferation in Russia's neighbouring countries posed a threat to Russia's national security.

Strengthening the president's hand.

They could also ease the grip of entrenched conservatives in the religious establishment, the judiciary and parliament.

Sociologist Abbas Mokhiber said that in the absence of elected councils, power in the villages and towns had largely devolved to the clergy, in particular to the leaders of the Friday prayers.

"Now if the elections take place, new portions of society will enter the power structure and information will start flowing. There will be a new, more democratic distribution of power," Mokhiber told Reuters.

"Power will begin to decentralise. The impact will be immense." Article 100 of the Iranian constitution, approved in 1979, calls for creation of elected councils "in each village, division, city municipality and province." It has never taken effect.

Under current practice, the central government appoints local managers who operate with little public accountability.

Conservative MPs impeached Khatami's first interior minister, in part because they disapproved of his local appointments.

Voters instead prefer to focus on his cautious liberalisation campaign, in particular steps to establish the rule of law in political and social affairs.

Haifa residents will be at great risk if something happens to the refineries or petrochemical industries there, environment ministry director general, Nehama Ronen, said.

At Ramat Hovav, "toxic waste has been delivered without controls or treatment for 30 years," Ronen said.

"Tel Aviv residents are in

Cook: Inquiry cleared MI6 of Qadhafi plot

LONDON (R) — British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said on Sunday he had investigated claims made by a renegade intelligence officer and was satisfied no attempt had been made to assassinate Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi.

The allegation was made last week by David Shayler, a former member of Britain's intelligence services. He is in custody in Paris fighting moves to extradite him to Britain.

Cook said the allegation, that MI6 planned to kill Qadhafi in 1996 under the previous Conservative administration, was "pure fantasy."

"I have pursued these allegations and I am absolutely satisfied that the previous foreign secretary did not authorise any such assassination attempt," he told BBC television in an interview.

"And I am perfectly satisfied SIS [Secret Intelligence Service] never put forward any such proposal for an assassination attempt," Cook added.

According to Shayler, the plan was to kill Qadhafi in February 1996 by planting a bomb under his motorcade. But, he said, the device was placed by Islamists under the wrong car, killing several bystanders.

In the interview, Cook said Shayler did not actually work for SIS, the foreign intelligence service more commonly known as MI6, but its domestic counterpart, MI5.

Shayler's girlfriend, Annie Machon, told the same programme that as head of MI5's Libyan desk, Shayler was very well informed.

"He also struck up a particularly good working relationship with his opposite number at MI6 which is how he found out about the plot to kill Qadhafi," Machon said.

But she dismissed a story in the Sunday Times newspaper that Shayler had told his lawyers he had damaging information about a current Labour government minister. It quoted Shayler as saying the information could "blow up" the government.

"Certainly I have heard a lot of bizarre stories... I would put this story in that category," said Machon.

Asked if Shayler was the source of the story, she said "absolutely not," adding that it "was not impossible that a campaign of misinformation was being waged against him."

She also said she was "not in a position to answer that" when asked if Shayler was planning to make further allegations.

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Kenya has 'clues' to bombing

NAIROBI (AFP) — Kenya has "clues" about the identity of the perpetrators of a huge car-bomb blast at the U.S. embassy here Friday, President Daniel Arap Moi told journalists at the site Sunday as rescuers continued to find survivors in the rubble.

But the death toll reported by various sources continued to rise, standing at 156 early Sunday afternoon, and Moi said he expected the final toll to be more than 200 as the badly wounded died in hospitals and searchers found more bodies.

The blast wounded 4,824 people, the presidency said.

A virtually simultaneous, but less powerful blast at the U.S. embassy in neighbouring Tanzania left eight people dead, Dar Es Salaam doctors said.

U.S. President Bill Clinton vowed at a nationwide radio address to hunt down those behind the bombings.

"No matter how long it takes or where it takes us we will pursue terrorists until the cases are solved and justice is done," he said.

U.S. officials are tight-lipped about their short list of suspects, but Saudi-born millionaire fundamentalist Osama Ben Laden is at the top, experts said.

Ben Laden, 41, member of a family of wealthy Saudi construction tycoons, has allegedly bankrolled previous anti-U.S. attacks and is an outspoken anti-American Islamist.

Earlier in the year a U.S. television reporter from ABC news interviewed Ben Laden in his hideout in Afghanistan, where he is protected by the Taliban regime.

In the interview Ben Laden threatened attacks on U.S. sites and civilians in the coming months.

However, in Kabul, the Taliban said Ben Laden has nothing to do with the embassy attacks.

Senior spokesman Abdul Hai Mutmaen told AFP that any suggestions pointing towards Ben Laden's involvement were baseless propaganda.

Several groups have claimed responsibility for the attacks, including the previously unknown Islamic Army for the Liberation of Holy Shrines, the so-called Liberation Army of the Islamic Sanctuaries.

Moi, asked about arrests, replied: "At this moment I don't want to say anything about that because it could jeopardise the investigation."

"We have clues about several things... which could lead to good information," he said.

Israeli soldiers meanwhile found a woman and her 14-year-old son alive on the 22nd floor of the nearby Cooperative Bank building, which was badly damaged, and rescued both. They found a body five floors below.

They were continuing to dig through the rubble of a collapsed four-storey building between the bank and the embassy in a bid to extract a woman still alive.

John Sparrow, spokesman for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, identified her as Rose Wanjiku. She told the rescuers her face was burnt.

She had been on the second floor of the building, Gateway House. "She was talking a lot during the night, but at times went quiet," Sparrow told AFP.

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ALL FOR HALF-A-DOLLAR: A dog performs a balancing act during a street show in Calcutta on Saturday. The dog climbs nimbly from the bottom tin container to the top and when he reaches the summit, he perches there displaying a fine sense of balance for the remainder of the half-hour performance. The dog's owner makes about \$0.50 per show thanks to the dog's skill and patience (AFP photo)

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When in India do not kiss in public

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Foreign tourists visiting India have been told by the Hindu nationalist-led government not to kiss in public, a report said Sunday. The Asian Age newspaper quoting "suggestions, advice and instructions" from India's eco-tourism policy guidelines said the tourists were advised to "respect the local etiquette and wear loose clothes. Kissing in public is disapproved of."

Daredevil Harry

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's Princes William and Harry were at the centre of a safety row Saturday after Harry was photographed abseiling down a 160 foot dam wall without protective helmets, boots or safetyline. The daredevil stunt occurred last Sunday at a dam in the Black Mountains of Gwent, Wales. Under the banner headline "Madness," the News of the World published front page pictures of 13-year-old Harry abseiling down the dam with only a single rope attached to him, as his brother William 16, looked on.

'Gay Games' makes record attendance

AMSTERDAM (AFP) — The fifth "Gay Games" ended Saturday on a note of triumph in Amsterdam after a week of sporting and other events which attracted thousands of visitors to this Dutch city. Later a closing party was organised in the Amsterdam Arena. Some 15,000 competitors from 88 countries took part in the 34 competitions. "This is a great victory. We had record attendance compared to previous games," said the games spokesman. "Until today, no homosexual event in the world had ever attracted so many people," he added.

Finding love in Italy

ROME (R) — Lust tops the list of Italy's attractions for women tourists, with gastronomic goodies coming a close second, a survey showed. Thirty-six per cent of the female tourists from Europe and the United States said hopes of finding passion had brought them to Italy, while 29 per cent named food as their number one draw. But 60 per cent of the 672 women polled said they preferred northern Italian men to the raven-haired, suntanned specimens of the poor south.

If your dog does not behave, you will pay

MOSCOW (R) — A provincial Russian town has ordered pet-lovers to stop their dogs barking at night and to stay off the alcohol if they want to take them for a walk. Reporting from the town of Naberezhnye Chelny in Russia, Interfax news agency said dog owners faced a fine of up to 15 rubles (\$2.40) if they did not comply with the measure, which covers the hours from 10 p.m. to 8 a.m.

Narrowly avoiding catastrophe, Israel remains on brink of ecological disaster

By Jo Strich
Agence France Presse

TEL AVIV — Israel narrowly avoided a Chernobyl-like catastrophe when a fire tore through its main toxic waste dump last week, but environmental officials wonder how much longer the country's luck can hold.

Firefighters managed to contain the fire that raged through the Ramat Hovav dump near the Negev Desert city of Beersheva last Sunday before it reached waste that would have exploded, spewing pollutants into the atmosphere.

The land of milk and honey has been soured by careless handling of the environment, and there has already been a number of unfortunate incidents across the country.

In July 1997, a bridge over the Yarkon River near Tel Aviv collapsed as Jewish athletes from around the world paraded across for the opening ceremony of the Maccabiah games, or Jewish Olympics.

Four members of the Australian athletic squad died, one of poisoning from the river's toxic brew.

In the northern city of Haifa, fire swept through oil refineries most recently in March 1995. And in April 1994, a blaze ravaged Haifa bay's Kuryat Ata gas storage facility.

Haifa residents will be at great risk if something happens to the refineries or petrochemical industries there, environment ministry director general, Nehama Ronen, said.

At Ramat Hovav, "toxic waste has been delivered without controls or treatment for 30 years," Ronen said.

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